Encyclopaedia of Indian History

ANCIENT • MEDIEVAL • MODERN

ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF INDIAN HISTORY

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(VOLUME I)

by

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Preface

The four-volume publication *Encyclopaedia of Indian History* has caught the imagination of the readers The growing popularity of these books among the post-graduate students and researches in the history of India is evidenced by the ever increasing correspondence of the editor with them as also by the challenge of press review from scholars from various parts of the country The editor highly appreciate comments on and critical evaluation of this books by those interested in the subject, he always bears in mind their valuable suggestion for qualitative improvement of the material wherever necessary

We are passing through a very serious socio-cultural and national crisis today The rising tide of fundamentalism, regional and parochial outlook, and the racial and linguistic controversies threaten the very fabric of composite Indian culture and the concept of secular nation-state, evolved laboriously by one of our ancestors—Akbar, The Great, and so fondly cherished by the modern Indian leadership This book does not have a direct bearing on all these aspects, nevertheless, it may provide, in historical perspective, an insight into the causes and remedies of some of these problems to the readers

A brief resume on the survey of sources, which

precedes the text in all of the four volumes of this study by way of an introduction, may give an idea to the scholars of history, particularly the subject-specialists, of the deep involvement of the author in the field of his study and research As a matter of fact, it reveals but a tip of the iceberg of the source-material on Indian history which the editor has built over the last twenty-five years

Editor

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1
Introduction

History is a record of past events, both glorious and ignominious It is not merely a data of facts but a romance about the past and an inspiration for the future It portrays both the achievements and failures of mankind It depicts without passion or prejudice the past, both good or bad, the years of growth as well as years of decay, the rise and fall of empires, the consolidation and the disintegration of Kingdoms and accomplishments and failures of great monarchs History proper is again divisible into various branches, viz , economic, political, religious, cultural, social and odd The scholars of every branch of study are bound to interpret the past from their own viewpoint History is, therefore, the record of what one age would consider worthy of note in another The past is intelligible to us only in the light of the present and we can fully grasp the present only with our knowledge of past History is thus a continuity It is continuity that goes on without our being able to withhold it, from generation to generation and links our own times to the most distant ages It is also a unity because the life of an individual in a society is bound up with the lives of his fellow beings Likewise, the history of one nation or a community is the part of the history of the world Buddha and Gandhi were born in India, but their teachings have had deep impact upon the course of world history and have transformed the character of a large number of people Likewise, the Industrial

Revolution took place in England but it brought about upheaval in the economy of the world and altered the destiny of many nations It, therefore, hardly needs an emphasis that the study of so marvellous a subject is bound to be both exciting and rewarding The craving for knowledge of the past and its interpretation is manifest and innate in human nature That is why History as a subject is being taught in schools and Universities as a basic part of study from childhood to adult age

The history of one's own country provides an added interest and inspiration to an individual It not only takes him into the flights of imagination, adventure and romance but he achieves in its study the satisfaction of his inner cravings, a sort of fulfilment, a sort of oneness with one's own past and present and a means of his communication with his great ancestors This study, therefore, helps in the development of one's personality as well as creates a patriotic mental fervour The history of India has its own marvels and peculiarities Our present social structure and civilization is broadly a continuation of our past Our religion still conforms to the Vedic hymns and rituals followed by, our great ancestors, the Aryans They were rural people, worshipped nature and led a simple unsophisticated life Our country is a land of villages Our economy is, still largely agricultural We still cherish the concept of toleration preached by Asoka, the magnificent Emperor of India, more than 2000 years ago and reiterated by Akbar, the great Mughal, in the 16th century A D Then we are still continuing the joint family system of the Aryans under which the parents in their old age live with their children, shower their boundless affections upon them and receive in their turn the obedience, respect and service from them These and many other virtues

of the Indian life constitute the greatness of our civilization

The geographical location of a country largely influences the course of its history The mountains and valleys, the plains and the plateaus, the rivers and seas, the forests and the fields and odd geographical factors deeply transform the character of a nation and thus influence its history India is surrounded in the South, East and West by open sea and in the North by the great Himalayas In the north east and the northwest, there are other ranges of hills connecting the main chain of the Himalayas with the sea These natural boundaries provided her security against foreign invasions and thus helped her to evolve a distinct way of life, but she never found herself cut off from the rest of the world From the earliest times, we had trade and other relations with distant countries of Asia, and Europe, although this contact sometimes grew enfeebled with the, weakening of the central authority in the mainland The extensive area of the country presents a variety of physical environment and climate under which different races, tribes and communities have flourished from time to time They demonstrate both their individuality and distinctness as well as unity and oneness of the country, Physically, the country is divisible into four regions the hilly tracts of North, East and West, (ii) the Indo-Gangetic Plains, (iii) the Deccan Plateau and (iv) the coastal plains The fertile Indo-Gangetic Plains gave great impetus to agriculture The wild forests and the lofty mountains in the Himalayas produced wood and metals stimulating development of manufacture and industry The large navigable rivers and wide seacoasts fostered internal as well as foreign trade The outcome of these factors was that prior to coming of Europeans and consequent upon British conquest,

India had been reputed for her wealth and richness all over the world In a way, this made her the victim of foreign aggression and a large number of invaders came to India from the passes of Khyber and Bolan in the Hindukush mountains These invaders came to plunder the wealth and destroy her civilization but the enervating and soothing climate of the country tamed their ruggedness and ferocity and soon after, they found themselves merged and absorbed with the tolerant culture of the land Then the sublime beauty of nature and easy means of livelihood produced a philosophic and religious bent of mind and India won greater laurels in the domains of art, literature, philosophy and religion than in other domains of life

The name of the country, from the earliest times up to this day, has been 'Bharata Varsha'a land founded by the King Bharata, the son of Dushyanta and Shakuntala

The Vishnu 'Purana states,

"Uttaram yat Samudrasya
Himadreschaiva dakshinam,
Varsham tad Bharatam nama
Bharati yatra Santatih

The names of the country, India and Hindustan, come from the name of river Indus whom the Hindus called 'Sindhu' the Persians, 'Hindu' and the Greeks, 'Indus', From 'Hindu', there originated the name of Hind or Hindustan and from 'Indus', was derived the name, 'India' The Constitution of Indian Republic of 1950 [article 1 (1)] gives the name "India that is Bharat" We shall now revert to a resume of Indian history proper

The scientists tell us that our forefathers had inhabited this planet for more than 100,000 years or so

but we do not possess the recorded history of mankind domain of Indian beyond 3,000 years or at the most 5,000 years past In the history, our knowledge extends to the days of Indus Valley civilization before the coming of the Aryans This civilization developed betwecn 3000 B C and 1500 B C The excavations of its ruins at Mohenjo daro in the Larkana district in Sind and at Harappa in Montgomery district in Punjab in the years 1922-23 A D have demonstrated that a highly accomplished civilization flourished in those regions There were magnificent towns, well-planned and well-built The houses were made of good quality bricks and had two or more storeys The People lived a luxurious life They wore fine dresses and beautiful ornaments made of gold, silver and copper etc Their diet mainly consisted of wheat but they also ate mutton, pork and eggs Much is not known about their religion but most probably worshipped Siva and Mother-Goddess It is unfortunate that we possess no evidence of their written history but it is certain that the Indus Valley civilization was not confined to a small area and was probably prevalent all over Northern India It is again not known for certainty how this splendid civilization flourishing over a large part of the country came to an eclipse It seems most likely that it was destroyed by barbarous tribes who had no use for urban civilization

The next landmark in the history of ancient India is the coming of Aryans From where, when and why they came to our land are dilemmas of history They drove the Dravidians into the south and gradually established their sway over the whole of Northern India, Their civilization is known as the Vedic Civilization It was during this age that the four great, Vedas, the Rigveda, the Atharvaveda, the Samaveda and the, Yajurveda were composed The Vedas are

primarily religious treatises but they also contain vivid references to social, economic and political life of the Aryan people In the early stages of their settlement the Aryans were largely rural tribes They worshipped nature and led a simple life in the open The head of the family was the father although women were given their due respect There was no rigid caste system but the Brahmans and the Kashatriyas enjoyed a position of eminence The predominant occupation of the people was agriculture and there were no industries Each village was a self contained unit There were neither great towns nor mighty kings With passage of time, each of the tribes established itself firmly over a definite area and thus there grew a few small Kingdoms The head of each Kingdom was called the 'Rajan' (King) and this position was usually hereditary, although certain communities established 'Janapadas' (the republics)

The Aryan civilization lasted for one thousand years or so and its later age is known as the age of Epics The two great Epics are the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, Ramayana being older of the two It depicts the story of Rama of Ayodhya He was the son of Dasharatha and had three step brothers Lakshmana, Shatrughna and Bharata Rama married Sita, the daughter of King Janaka Being the eldest son of his father, he was to become the King But due to machinations of his stepmother Kaikeyi, who wanted her son Bharata, to become the King, Rama was banished by his father to the forest for fourteen years His wife Sita and Lakshmana accompanied him During his exile, Rama came into conflict with Ravana, the demon king of Lanka The latter forcibly carried away Rama's wife Sita to Lanka Rama, therefore, waged a war against Ravana with the assistance of Sugriva, the non-Aryan King of Kishkindha in the

Bellary Dıstrıct ın South Indıa whom he had helped to sıeze the throne from hıs brother, Balı Ravana was defeated and kılled ın the battle Rama handed over the kıngdom of Lanka to Ravana's brother Vıbhıshana and hımself returned to Ayodhya along wıth hıs wıfe Sıta and hıs brother Lakshmana There he reıgned ın peace and glory for a pretty long span of tıme The Mahabharata relates the struggle between the Kauravas and Pandavas ın whıch the latter were finally trıumphant The Kauravas were the sons of Kıng Dhrıtarashtra, headed by theır eldest brother, Duryodhona They had theır capıtal at Hastınapur The Pandavas were fıve brothers, Yudhıshthıra, Bhımasena, Arȷuna, Nakula and Sahdeva and they had theır capıtal at Indraprastha The causes of conflıct between the Kauravas and the Pandavas were numerous and are not of hıstorıcal ınterest but the fıerce battle that was fought between them at Kurukshetra has ıts echo up to thıs day havıng been ȷoıned by a large number of Kıngs all over the country one sıde or other The Pandavas finally won the battle of Kurukshetra and later reıgned ın glory for a long span wıth Yudhıshthıra as theır Kıng These epıcs thus state that the Aryans had penetrated ınto extreme south and a number of ındependent kıngdom were establıshed The ınstıtutıon of heredıtary monarchy had been firmly establıshed and the system and become rıgıd The relıgıon had undergone a vıtal change and the worshıp of nature alone had been substıtuted by varıous rıtuals and new dıvınıtıes The rural character of the Aryan settlements had been transformed wıth the growth of a number of townshıps and forts Much emphasıs was laıd on moralıty and character as was evıdent from the conduct of prıncıpal characters of the two epıcs

The close of seventh century B C marks a decısıve

stage in the history of India because it is only thereafter that we are able to establish with some certainty a chronological order for principal events on the basis of Buddhist and Jainatexts Lord Buddha lived between 566 and 480 B C His original name was Gautama and he was born in the village of Lumbini near Kapilvastu in Nepal From his early childhood, Gautama was endowed with a meditative bent of mind and was often deeply moved by miseries of human life At the age of twenty nine, he renounced the world and became a homeless ascetic in search of peace It was only after long years of meditation and penance that Gautama attained supreme knowledge at BodhGaya and subsequently came to be known as Buddha, ie, enlightened He founded a new sect and wandered for forty years or so to explain its principles His main emphasis was that the cause of human sorrow was craving for possession and this craving could be removed by following an eight fold Right path, for example Right Views, Right Action, Right Speech, etc Mahavira, the founder of jainism was a contemporary of Buddha He lived between 540 to 468 B C and according to the orthodox Jain traditions, he was the last of 24 'Tirthankars' (religious teachers) The original name of Mahavira was Vardhamana His father was Siddhartha, a Jnatrika chief of Kundapura and his mother Trisale was related to the ruling families of Magadha and Vaisali Lie married a princess named Yasoda and lived the life of an ordinary householder till at age of thirty, he renounced the world and started roaming and penancing as a naked ascetic in search of truth After 12 years of hard penance, Vardhamana attained supreme knowledge and obtained final deliverance from the bonds of pleasure and pain He then became, a Jina' (Conqueror) and Mahavira (the great hero) From the'Jina'his followers came to be known as the Jains

and his sect as Jainism Like Buddhism, Jainism places emphasis on 'Ahimsa' (noninjury to living creatures, including plants and animals), right conduct and nonattachment Both Buddhism and Jainism won a large number of adherants and as a result thereof, many cannonical texts expounding various doctrines of faith were written It has been now established on the strength of those religious texts that during the time of Lord Buddha, there was no paramount power in Northern India and the country was divided into a number of independent states both monarchical and republican or oligarchic The four principal kingdoms were Magadha, Kosala, Avanti and Vatsa Among the republican states, the Lichchavis were the predominant

The non-existence of a paramount central power in the country was bound to make the land a hapless prey to foreign aggression So when the Persians and the Greeks invaded India, they did not encounter any effective resistance from the local populace of the border provinces The hordes of the Persian King, Cyrus probably captured the land of Gandharas, near modern Peshawar in Pakistan Darius (522-486 B C) later also annexed a part of Rajputana to the Persian dominion and his Indian territory contributed huge revenue, perhaps greater than what was derived from the rest of all his dominions to the Persian exchequer It is not known for certainty how long the Persian dominion in India survived but when Alexander, the great, was capable of inflicting a crushing defeat on the Persian King, Darius III, at Gaugamela, he embarked upon the invasion of India In May of 327 B C Alexander crossed the mountains of Hindukush and entered the Indian territory Ambhi the King of Taxila, offered to help him, but his ignoble example was not followed by any other prince, Alexander had

therefore to face stubborn resistance from the local tribes, both oligarchic and republican, before making any headway in India The battle between Alexander and Porus, the ruler of a kingdom between Jhelum and Chenab, is too well known to every Indian and particularly, the dialogue between the two gallant warriors after the defeat of Porus Tradition goes that Porus with numerous wounds on his body was led a captive before Alexander The Greek conqueror asked his Indian foe what treatment should be meted out to him and there came the proud reply from Porus 'As a King treats a King' It was thus not surprising that when the soldiers of Alexander heard of the mighty Nandas of Magadha, they mutinied and refused to proceed beyond Beas As a result, Alexander had to order retreat and on his way home, he died in 323 B C, at Babylon

"The invasion of India by Alexander the Great of Macedon in 326 B C , which occurred during the rule of the Nandas in Magadha and is more interesting than any other episode of early Indian history to most European leaders, made so little impression in the minds of the inhabitants of the country that no distinct reference to it is to be found in any branch of ancient India's literature Dr R C Majumdar also states, "The invasion of Alexander the Great has been recorded in minute details by the Greek historians who naturally felt elated at the triumphant progress of their hero over unknown lands and seas From the Indian point of view, its importance lies in the fact that it opened up a free intercourse between India and the Western countries which was big with future consequences For the rest there was nothing to distinguish his raid in Indian history It can hardly be called a great military success as the only military achievements to his credit were the conquest of pretty tribes and states by

instalments He never approached even within a measurable distance of what may be called the citadel of Indian military strength, and the exertions he had to make against Porus, the ruler of a small district between the Jhelum and the Chenab, do not certainly favour the hypothesis that he would have found it an easy task to subdue the mighty Nanda empire Instead the mutiny of his troops to march further beyond Beas because of the terror created in their minds by learning about the valour and power of the mighty Nanda army fills us with pride that our great ancestors in ancient days had the strength and capacity to strike terror in the minds of foreign invaders Unfortunately, when the country neglected its defences and was weakened, the foreign tribes came and conquered our country resulting in the establishment of their empires, although merging themselves with the culture and traditions of the people to become part and parcel of the Indian nation The direct and immediate consequence of Alexander's invasion was, however, a great boon as it provided an opportunity to Chandragupta Maurya to consolidate and unify the entire country under the Mauryan Umbrella of sovereignty and usher a new era of glory and accomplishment in all aspects of human activity—administration, art, economic prosperity and religion

There was no central 'paramount power in the country at the time of Alexander's invasion Instead, "northwestern India was parcelled into innumerable kingdoms, principalities and 'republics", which were often embroiled in petty internecine feuds and jealousies, one attempting to swallow the other, fully or partly in whatever manner it could be achieved In his celebrated work entitled Political History of Ancient India—From the Accession of Parikshit to the Extinction of the Gupta Dyrasty, Dr Hemchandra

Raychaudhuri, gives a long list of the important states—The Aspain territory (Alishang -Kumar-Bajaur Valley), (2) The country of the Guraeans(between the land of the Aspasians and the country of the Assakenians), (3) The kingdom of Assakenos (part of Swat and Buner), (4) Nysa (a small hill-state which lay at the foot of Mt Meros between the Kabul river and the Indus, (5) Penkelaotis (Peshawar District), (6) Taxila (in Rawalpindi district), (7) The kingdom of Arsakes(Hazara district), (8) Abhisara (Punch in Kashmir and adjoining area with a part of Hazara district in NWFP), (9) The kingdom of the Elder Porus (territory between the Jhelum and the chenab), (10) Glaugan-i-Kai(west of the chenab and conterminous with the dominion of Porus), (11) Gabdaris (in the Rechana Doab), (12) The Adraistai (in the Bari Doab), (13) Kaqthaioi (probably also in the Bari Doab), (14) The kingdom of Sophytes (probably along the banks of Jhelum),

After inflicting a crushing defeat at the Achaemenian King Darius III at Gaugmela, Alexander crossed the Hindukush and entered India in 327 B C Ambhi, the ruler of Taxila gave him a warm welcome and offered costly presents of silver and gold as well as sheep and oxen of fine breed Alexander accepted these gifts with pleasure and after adding his own returned them back to Ambhi, winning completely the heart and loyalty of his new friend and admirer Following the example of Taxila, Abhisares, the prince of Abhisara also submission to Alexander, considering that it would be difficult to fight him The ignominious example of Taxila and Ambhisara was, however, not followed by the other states and many of them offered a fierce, resistance to the foreign invader Those whose mention could be made definitely were the Assakenos and the Aspasians It is stated that Alexander was

himself wounded in an encounter and he ordered with vengeance that the entire population may be rmassacred This however, did not deter the brave people who continued the their fight with greater valour and desperation Dr Majumdar states that "when the king of Assakienoi fell fignting his army was led by the queen, whose example induced the entire womanhood of the locality to join this struggle for freedom After a brave resistance for several days Massaga, the capital city, capitulated

It was, however, at the hands of Porus that Alexander tasted the true valour of the Indians Plutarch, the best biographer of Alexander stated that "the combat with Porus abated the spirit of the Macedonians and made them to resolve to proceed no further in India "

Alexander is stated to have sent his envoys to Porus from Taxila that he should meet the great emperor to which the latter sent a reply that he would be glad to meet him only with his army at his frontiers and thus came the historic combat between the two great generals of the world, Alexander and Porus The brave Indian army consisted of 50,000 foot, 3,000 horse, above 1,000 chariots and 130 elephants assembled at Karri plain When Alexander had a look at this grand force, he remarked, "I see at last a danger that matches my courage It is at once with wild beasts and men of uncommon mettle that the contest now lies" If that had been so, the battle could not have been anything but most furious and fierce in which the soldiers of Porus fought with great courage and Plutarch stated that they obstinately maintained their ground till the eighth hour of the day, although the fortunes went against them The brave Porus, "a magnificient giant of over six feet in height did not run away from the stress of the battle and despite nine

wounds on his body, continued fighting until he was caught by the enemy and escorted before Alexander as a captive He had certainly been crushed in the body but his spirits were still in fine mettle Thus when Alexander asked Porus how he should be treated, prompt came the reply "Treat me, O Alexander, as befits a King" Alexander also was not lacking in generosity and made Porus his friend, restoring him not only his dominions but other territories contingent to them In the course of his further advance, Alexander had to fight the brave people of Kathaiois of whom 17,000 were killed and 70,000 were captured As the army of Alexander reached the banks of the river, Beas, it refused to fight further and had to be despatched back to home On his return journey, Alexander breathed his last in 323 BC at Babylon

Militarily or politically, the invasion of Alexander had no direct impact Economically or commercially, it established the new contacts between India and Europe breaking down the walls of separation between East and West and opened new routes by land or sea for communication Culturally, both the Greek and Indian people learnt from each other and mutually influenced the development of art, literature and thought From the view-point of the historians, the Greek chroniclers have left to us a vivid picture of the political, social and Nandas Who were the Nandas? Discuss their history and achievements

The invasion of Alexander left no imprint on the history of India and it is not surprising that the contemporary Indian chronicles make no mention or the exploits of the mighty Greek conqueror But the raid certainly had some aftermath good effects The confusion following the death of Alexander gave Chandragupta Maurya, an ambitious and valiant young prince, a god-sent opportunity to liberate the

country from the yoke of Greeks and thus occupy the, provinces of Punjab and Sind He later overthrew the power of Nandas at Magadha with the aid of Kautilya and thus founded a glorious Maurya Empire in 322 B C Chandragupta thus earned a title of the Liberator and the first Emperor of the Bharata, Much is not known for certainty about the early life of this great hero but the accounts of Megasthenes and Kautilya's Arthashastra give a vivid description about the system of Mauryan administration founded by Chandragupta The king was the head of the polity and was aided by an elaborate bureaucracy with numerous departments and a hierachy of officials He looked earnestly to the welfare of his subjects Kautilya lays down, "The happiness of his Subjects is the happiness of the King, the good of the Subjects his good What pleases him is not good for the King but what pleases his Subjects is The history of the reign of Bindusara son of Chabdragupta Maurya, is still shrouded in mystery but chandragupta's grandson Asoka won an immortal fame by ren renouncing the policy of war and adopting a paternalistic conception of Kingship "All men are my children, and just as I desire for my children that they may enjoy every kind of prosperity and happiness, in both this world and the next, so also I desire the same for all men " He thus founded the first welfare state of the world and took effective measures for both the moral and material welfare of his subjects He built roads and planted trees over them, made hospitals for both men and animals, engraved principles of good conduct and religion on the rocks and pillars and exhorted his people to lead a simple and pure life The reign of Asoka thus constitutes a golden interlude without a parallel in the history of the world

The death of Asoka in 232 B C was a signal for the dismemberment of the extensive Mauryan Empire

His weak successors neither possessed the material valour nor the fervent zeal to promote the welfare of their subjects The foreign invasions were on increase so were the internal revolts In 185 B C , Pushyamitra, the Brahman Commander- in-Chief of the last Maurya King Brihadratha, killed his master and himself ascended the throne The dynasty founded by Pushyamitra is known as Sungas There were ten Sunga Kings who ruled for a period of more than hundred years (185-73 B C) The Sungas in their turn were overthrown by Vasudeva, a King's Minister, who got his master killed and founded the Kanva dynasty There were four Kanva Kings and they ruled from Magadha for 45 years But gone were the days of glory of mighty Maurya monarchs Chandragupta, Bindusara and Asoka The country was parcelled into various small principalities inhabited by numerous tribes and communities, some of whom flourished from time to time and brought glory to the motherland The Satvahanas ruled in the South with splendour for quite a long time They were at their zenith under Gautamiputra Satkarni and extended their sway to large tracts of central and western India In the extreme South, there flourished the kingdoms of Cholas, Pandyas and Cheras The kingdom of Kalinga which had been conquered by Asoka after a fierce battle resulting in immense bloodshed and misery, had regained its independence Under the stewardship of Kharavela, the Kalinga army made its weight felt in the whole of central India and at one time, conquered Magaaha Kharavela was as proficient in the arts of peace as in war and constructed numerous palatial buildings as well as large irrigation works A number of foreign immigrant tribes also invaded the country during this period and later on settled on its soil Among them, the prominent were the Greeks, the

Parthians, the Sakas and the Kushans The most outstanding King of the Kushans was Kanishka He established an extensive, empire stretching to a number of distant provinces in China and Afghanistan and made Purushapura, modern Peshawar, as his capital Kanishka also championed the cause of Buddhism and convoked the Fourth Buddhist Council In the Buddhist ecclesiastical history, his memory is cherished with admiration only next to Asoka The Kushan rule continued till the middle of third century A D The most notable achievement of their rule was the development of Gandhara School of art and further spread of Buddhism into distant regions of Asia The next important landmark in the history of India is the rise of Guptas This dynastly was found by Chandragupta, 1 He started the Gupta Era at the time of his coronation in 320 A D and styled himself as 'Maharajadhiraja' He married a princess of Lichchavi family named Kumardevi This probably helped him a good deal to extend his authority to vast dominions over large tracts of modern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar Chandragupta, therefore, struck coins in joint name of himself and his consort His son and successor, Sarnudragupta was one of the great military geniuses that India has produced In a whirlwind campaign over the whole of Northern India and the Deccan, he subdued a large number of Kings, a record of which has been preserved for us in the famous Allahabad inscription composed by the King's Minister and poet, Harishena Samudragupta was not only a mighty conqueror but an able administrator and a great patron of art and music The next King, Chandragupta II, also known as Vikramaditya was a distinguished son of a distinguished father He conquered the extensive territories of Malwa, Gujarat and Kathiawar and transferred his capital to Ujjain It

was most probably during his reign that Kalidasa, the greatest Sanskrit poet and dramatist, and many other scientists and scholars flourshed Fa-hien, a Chinese traveller who visited India during his reign speaks highly about prosperity and good administration of the country He writes, "The people are numerous and happy They have not to register their households or to attend to any magistrates and their rules The King governs without decapitation or corporal punishments " Vikramaditya's son Kumar Gupta and grandson SKand Gupta maintained the noble traditions established by their ancestors and upheld the cause of Dharma The Gupta period is known as the golden prime of Indian history The country was well administrated and attained the pinnacle of glory in the domains of art, literature and science Hinduism was at the height of its zenith, although both Buddhism and Jainism flourished side by side under benign policy of toleration adopted by Gupta Kings The decline of Gupta power in Northern India towards the close of fifth century A D gave way to the inevitable results—rise of various small independent Kingdoms and foreign invasions of Huns Under their leader, Toramana, they penetrated into the interior of the Gupta Kingdom and established their power over vast tracts of Punjab, Kashmir, Malwa, Rajputana and a part of U P His son, Mihirakula, established his capital at Sakala but he suffered a devastating defeat at the hands of Yasadharman of Malwa resulting in the collapse of Hun power in in India At the commencement of the 7th century, Harshavardhana ascended the throne of Thanesar and Kanauj on the murder of his brother, Rajya-Vardhana He embarked upon career of conquest and aggrandisement After incessant warfare of six years, Harsha was successful in establishing order over a large part of Northern

India His advance towards Deccan was checked by a decisive defeat at the hands of Pulakesin, Chalukya king of the South Harsh-Vardhana was mighty King combining in himself the qualities of both Samudragupta and Asoka The Chinese traveller, Hiuen Tsang, who visited the country during his reign, has given a vivid description of social, economic and religious condition under the rule of Harsha and spoke highly of the King Harsha, indeed, was the last Hindu Emperor of Northern India

After the death of Harsha, there was no Central paramount power in the country, although so many dynasties flourished in various parts of the country As Harsha had left no successor to the throne—he had probably go son and his daughter had been married to Dhruvabhata of Valabhi, the throne of Kanauj was seized by one of his ministers, Arjuna There is a curious story of an encounter between the new king and the Chinese mission on pilgrimage to India Arjuna was stated to have been opposed to the visit of the mission led by Wang-heuen-tse as a result of which a number of the Chinese escorts were killed and their property looted Wang-heuen-tse, however, escaped and fled to Tibet He later invaded India with the help of Stong-besan-Gampo, King of Tibet and a contingent also from Nepal Arjuna was perhaps defeated and captured as a prisoner It is difficult to accept the historical authenticity of the story but the empire of Harsha certainly eclipsed soon from history

2

Pre-Historic People

The terms pre-history, pre-historian, and pre-historic are strictly speaking, misnomers, there is no period before history begins and so to call a subject pre-history would, at first sight, appear absurd However, the use of the terms has become established in modern speech and literature, they have come to represent something that everybody understands, and as there are no more scientific expressions to replace them, it would be absurd and pedantic to attempt to make a change now Pre-history, then, is the subject which deals with the story of man and everything that concerns him from that dim remote moment when he first emerged from his animal ancestry until the time when the existence of records leaves the investigator into the realm of history proper " The earliest settlers in India have been divided into two classes, viz , Palaeolithic and Neolithic The term Palaeolithic is derived from two Greek words meaning Old Stone The term Neolithic is derived from two Greek words meaning New Stone The name Palaeolithic is applied to the earliest people as the only evidence of their existence is given by a number of rude stone implements Scholars like Paterson, Krishnaswamy Aiyappan, Dr Sankalia Seshadri, Dr B Subbarao, DharaniSen, De Terra and Zeuner have made valuable contributions to the knowledge of this period We have no knowledge of many Palaeolithic remains in India because caves and river-beds have not been

systematically investigated and climate has' also not preserved the remains in India Most of the Palaeolithic remains in India are made of a peculiar kind of rock called "Quartzite" From this fact, the Palaeolithic men in India are also known as 'Quartzite men' The Palaeolithic men avoided forests on account of the difficulty of clearing them with their primitive weapons Palaeolithic have been found in South India in Madurai, Tanjore, Kadur, Nyamti, Taliya and Bellary district The district of Cuddapah was also a centre of Palaeo-lithic culture in South India as it is the home of true Quartzites, Later Palaeolithic remains have been found in the neighbourhood of Madras The districts of Guntur, Godavari and Krishna have also given Palaeolithic finds In the Kurnul district, the finds are from caves, containing traces of human habitation and extinct animals Pottery has also been found in these caves

Palaeolithic remains have also been found in Hyderabad, Dharwar, Bijapur, Belgaum, Gujarat Rewa and Bundhelkhand Old stone implements have also been found in Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh There must have been some connection between the Palaeolithic peoples of different parts of India as the finds are similar in different parts

The Palaeolithic man in India was a savage who lived in the "drifts of rivers or lakes and caves " He ate roots, fruits, nuts and the flesh of wild beasts We come across various kinds of implements of this period, e g , axes, arrow-heads, spears, digging tools, circular stones, hurling choppers, knives, scrapers, hammer stones, etc These implements, when they were sharp-edged, were held in cleft bamboos, secured by strips of hide or vegetable fibre Some of these implements had thick butt ends, which were used for digging edible roots or for hand to hand fights Implements of hard

wood were also used Those were clubs or sharp-edged spheres However, no remains of them have been found because white ants have finished them

The Palaeolithic man in India knew the use of fire Traces of fire having been used are found in Kurnul caves The Palaeolithic man had to protect himself from tigers, lions, panthers wolves, wild dogs, hyaenas, elephants, wild buffaloes, etc No wonder, the Palaeolithic man was a mighty hunter and he alto did not lack muscular strength

The presence of cinders in the Kurnul caves and the absence of human or animal skulls goes to prove that the dwellers were hunters of human scalp and performed some magical religious rites of which human sacrifices formed an important part No Palaeolithic graves have been found in India and the dead were left probably to natural decomposition or to be devoured by beasts Paintings were discovered in 1910 in some caverns at Singanpur near Raigarh in Madhya Pradesh These figure are believed to have been drawn with bamboo brushes They are made of red pigment and represent hunting scenes, groups of figures, hieroglyphics and drawings of animals Human figures, are in dancing postures The chief feature of Rajgarh paintings is their spirited expression and spontaneity of treatment Palaeolithic paintings have also been found in Kaimur ranges and also in the Mirzapur district It has been suggested that the Palaeolithic man belonged, to the Negrito race I like the modern people of the Andaman islands They had short stature, dark skin, wooly hairs and flat noses

Neolithic Man Neolithic sites in India have been found near the sea, lakes and mining and fishing areas such as Maski and Tinnevelly The important factor-which decided the settlement of Neolithic men in India was

the availability of the black coloured rock, which is more tough and tenacious than quartzite The Neolithic men occupied practically the whole of India except the portion below the Kaveri There were no Neo-lithic settlements in the extreme south The Neolithic remains found from the Tinnevelly district are considered to be importations from the north Salem district is very rich it, Neolithic finds The workmanship of the tools found in the Salem district is of a superior quality than that of those found in the north We have found rich collections of pottery from Malabar We have found toys, mace-heads, tiles, drilled stones, net sinkers and pottery from Mysore, Tools of various kinds have been found from the Bellary district Shell bangles of delicate workmanship have been found from Anantpur and Cuddapah districts, Different kinds of finds have been found from south and Central Bombay We have some information about the Neolithic men of Gujarat and Kathiawar The same applies to Sind and Baluchistan Central India has not been sufficiently explored No Neolitic finds have been found from Bengal

According to Bruce Foote, the Indian Neolithic implements can be classified into 78 distinct types 41 types belong to the polished class and 37 to the unpolished class To the polished class belong such implements as chisels, hammers, mortars, beads, buttons, discs, toys, etc To the unpolished class belong arrows, knives, lancets, wedges and mallets It appears that Neolithic men had-a fine sense of colour, and no wonder they chose stones of different colours for their tools

We come across a lot of pottery of the Neolithic Age Some of them are bowls, flower pots, Lotahs, Chatties, etc There is a variety of colour in Neolithic pottery It appears that different kinds of clay were

chosen, they were fired to different degrees and special pigments were applied to them The colours common were red, yellow, brown or purple-grey We have not come across any human or animal figures relating to the pottery of the Neolithic Age The figures common are leaves and flowers According to Bruce Foote, there was a gradual and continuous evolution in the potter's art before the great Aryan invasion under which the potter's craft came to be despised and neglected

We come across a lot of pottery of the Neolithic Age Some of them India, except the one in the Bellary district What has been found consists of rough sketches of birds, beasts and human beings According to B B Lal, "Till now four principal centres of these paintings have been detected (i) The Son valley in Mirzapur district, (ii) Manikpur and its neighbourhood in the Banda district—both in the U P , (iii) Singanpur in the Raigarh State and (iv) Hoshangabad and Pachmarhi in Mahadeo hills, C P "

The Neolithic people had their settlements in granite rocks They gave them 'natural protection from rain and the sun and could be con-veniently adapted for dwelling purposes No houses have been discovered even in such busy places as Bellary and Salem districts That was probably due to the fact that twigs and thatch materials were used for the construction of the houses and that has perished during the course of -time Pile dwellings have no, been found in India although there must have been some such settlements on the coast Cinder mounds have been found at several places in the Bellary district and also in Hyderabad

The food of the people consisted of fruits, vegetables, roots, nuts, wild pulses, cereals, flesh of animals, fish and milk products They knew the art of

the availability of the black coloured rock, which is more tough and tenacious than quartzite The Neolithic men occupied practically the whole of India except the portion below the Kaveri There were no Neo-lithic settlements in the extreme south The Neolithic remains found from the Tinnevelly district are considered to be importations from the north Salem district is very rich it, Neolithic finds The workmanship of the tools found in the Salem district is of a superior quality than that of those found in the north We have found rich collections of pottery from Malabar We have found toys, mace-heads, tiles, drilled stones, net sinkers and pottery from Mysore, Tools of various kinds have been found from the Bellary district Shell bangles of delicate workmanship have been found from Anantpur and Cuddapah districts, Different kinds of finds have been found from south and Central Bombay We have some information about the Neolithic men of Gujarat and Kathiawar The same applies to Sind and Baluchistan Central India has not been sufficiently explored No Neolitic finds have been found from Bengal

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no definite conclusions are possible until Positive evidence is furnished by further excavation "

As regards the survivals of the Neolithic Age, some of the Neolithic people were driven into hills and forests by later invaders and they are at Present represented by the Gonds, Bhils, Santhals, etc We have also inherited a number of superstitions from the Neolithic people The worship of manes and spirits and Phallus images of stone and wood can be traced to the Neolithic period The same can be said about the use of amulets, beads, sacred threads, shells, stones, etc , for curing diseases and keeping away the evil spirits The potter's wheel and the art of spinning and weaving are, also traced from the Neolithic period The same applies to omens

The Age of Metals The Neolithic Age was followed by the age of metals The transition from stone to metal was a slow and gradual process This is proved by the fact that the use of stone and metallic implements is found side by side There is also a close resemblance in the shape of early metal and Neolithic implements However, there is no uniformity regarding the use of metals in different parts of India In the case of Northern India, copper replaced stone as the ordinary material for tools and weapons Axes, swords, spear-heads and various other objects made of copper have been found in different parts of the country It was after the lapse of many centuries that iron came to be known and was gradually used as a substitute for copper The result is that we can make a distinction between the Copper Age and the early Iron Age in Northern India However, that was not so in southern India There the Iron Age immediately succeeded the Stone Age

Bronze is an alloy made up of nine parts of

Copper and one part of tin It is very suitable for the manufacture of tools and weapons It is true that bronze implements of early date have been found in India along with those of copper, but it does not follow that bronze was generally used in India to the exclusion of copper

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The Dravidians

Bishop Caldwell was the first who used the term Dravidian to denote the South Indian people Before him, they had been styled Tamilian, but as Tamilian signifies the Tamil proper and all South Indians, Caldwell confined the term Tamilian to the Tamil speaking peoples alone, reserving the term Dravidian to cover the Tamils, Telugu, Kanarese, Malayalam and other allied groups The reason why Caldwell chose the term Dravidian was that Sanskrit writers referred to the Southern peoples as *Dravidas* However, the Sanskrit writers used the term Dravida not in connection with the non-Brahmanical section in South India but with the Brahmanical immigrants there For example, the term Panchadradas denoted the Brahamanas of the five most prominent divisions in the south as distinct from the Panch Gaudas of the North Gnanasambanda was styled Dravidasisu by Sankara The family name Dravida in the Bombay Presidency is, the family name of the Brahamanas Thus, the term Dravida was originally used by Sanskrit writers only to indicate South Indian 'Brahamanas The use of Dravida to indicate the non Aryan peoples is not warranted by Sanskrit literary tradition, However the term Dravidian has long been used to indicate the non-Aryan peoples Sanskrit writers themselves seemed to have also used it in a broad geographical sense meaning South India in general The important point to be noticed is that

Caldwell derived the term Tamil from the word Dravida To quote him, "The Sanskrit name corresponding to Tamil is Dravida, a word which denotes both the country inhabited by the people called Dravidas and the language spoken by them And I have come to the conclusion that the words Tamil and Dravida, though they seem to differ a good deal, are identical in origin Supposing them to be one and the same word, it will be found much easier to derive Tamil from Dravida than Dravida from Tamil "

There are many theories regarding the origin of the Dravidians According to Kanakasabhai Pillai, the Dravidians were of Mongolian origin They came to India from Tibet and Nepal and settled in the whole of Bengal From there they went to South India and Ceylon As they left for the South from the Port of Tamralipti, they came to be known as Tamils The Yakshas mentioned in Sanskrit literature are the same as the Dravidians The people of Malabar and Nepal have the same ideas with regard to the chastity of women There were also artistic and architectural resemblances

Kanakasabhai Pillai writes that the invaders spread themselves over the whole of Bengal and from there emigrated by sea to South India and Ceylon The first of the Tamralipti tribes to emigrate were probably known as the Marar and the later Pandyas who called themselves Marar were descended from them The next tribe to migrate were probably known as Tirayar or sea kings "They were a great sea-faring race whose home appears to have been lower Bengal and who travelled by sea to Burma, Cochin-China, Ceylon and Southern India " Kanakasabhai connects the Cholas with the Tirayar and makes them identical

Besides the Marar and the Tirayar, there were

two other prominent Tamil tribes who settled in the South They were the Vanavaras and the Kosars The Chera kings belonged to this tribe and called themselves Vanavar They adopted the titles of Vanavarman and Hiranyavarman The advent of the Tamils from Bengal into South India was followed by the rise of the Tamil language as a result of the Mixture of the conquerors with the conquered, "Nagas and Dravidians" The conclusion of Kanakasabhai is that modern Malayalam "preserves that form of language which was spoken by the early Tamil immigrants, some time after they had settled in South India They had then learnt to use Dravidian words, but were not familiar with the personal signs of the verbs In this tradition, the Malayalam resembles the Mongolian, the Manchu and other primitive tongues of high Asia "

It is true that the view of Kanakasabhai is original and scholarly but critics have demolished every bit of his premises and conclusions According to Sir Herbert Risley, "It is extremely improbable that a large body of a very black and conspicuously long-headed type should have, come from the one region of the earth which is peopled exclusively by races with broad heads and yellow complexion With this we may dis-miss the theory which assigns a trans-Himalayan origin to the Dravidians " To the-philologist, the identification of Tamralipti with Tamil, of Marar with Mranmar, and of the Kosar with the Kushans, will look extremely fanciful Historically, they are inconsistent The identification of the Yakshas with the Tamils is pure surmise The inference that the Marar were the earliest immigrant tribe because they had a chief named Palayan, is extremely questionable, The theory regarding the Tarayars, their connection with the solar line and the Cholas, their occupation of

the Naga town of Kaveripattanam is a hopeless muddle of Puranic legends of a later period The connection of Vanavar with the Himlayan and Chinese tribes is pure speculation The architectural and social similarities between Malabar and Nepal might be due to accident or to the survival of certain Dravidian customs which had prevailed in the age when the whole country was under Dravidian occupation Kanakasabhai Pillai has no correct idea of the history of the Kushans and the Mauryas Every bit of his gigantic structure has been built on weak foundations and suffers from gross anachronism

Caldwell assigns, the original Dravidians to be Turanian homeland of Central Asia According to him, the Dravidian languages have got, in many respects, the features of the Scythian linguistic group All these languages are formed on one and the same grammatical system and in accordance with the same general laws They all express grammatical relations by the simple agglutination of auxiliary words or practices, whilst in the Semitic languages grammatical relation is expressed by variations in the internal vowels of the roots, and in the Chinese and other isolated, mono-syllabic languages, by the position of words in the sentence alone The Indo European languages' appear to have been, equally with the Scythian, agglutinative in origin, but they have come to require to be formed into a class by themselves, through their allowing their agglutinative auxiliary words to sink into the position of mere signs of inflexion " It is true that in some important particulars, the Dravidian languages have, undoubtedly approximated to the Indo-European, especially in this that instead of continuing to be purely agglutinative, they have become partly inflexional Several of the words of relation used as

auxiliaries in declesion and conjugation have ceased to be capable of being used as independent words, still it -would be unnecessary, on this account alone, to disconnect these languages wholly from the Scythian group, for those auxiliary words, though-they have now, in some instances, shrunk into the condition of fossilised relics, are always separable from the roots Caldwell sees much affinity between Dravidian and Indo-European as well as Scythian groups, but regards the connection with the latter as more significant Caldwell sees a confirmation of this theory in the translation of the Behistan Tablets, The Scythian portion of the inscription enables a comparison of the Dravidian and Scythian idioms Caldwell enumerates nine points of "grammatical resemblance between the two

Caldwell recognises that there are some discrepancies between the Scythian and Dravidian systems but he considers that those are more than counter-balanced by the resemblances He concedes that both in grammatical for is and roots, the Dravidian languages are more like the Indo-European languages-Sanskrit, Greek, Gothic, Celtic and Persian The conclusion of Caldwell is that the Dravidian languages were not influenced by the Scythian group alone, but they must have been also shaped to a certain extent by that original tongue which had given rise to Indo-Aryan languages Still, he holds that the Dravidian tongue is Scythian

Caldwell lays great emphasis on evidence to prove the immigration of the Dravidians from Central Asia through the North-West In both, nouns are denoted by post prepositions In both, the gender is ex-pressed not by inflexions but by separate words The conclusion of Caldwell is that the Brahuis must have been one of the numerous Dravidian tribes which found their way

into India However, critics point out that the Brahuis are ethnically very different from the Dravidians and they could not have belonged to the same race It is suggested that linguistic affinities might be due to mutual intercourse between them and the Dravidians during the stay of, the latter in the trans-Vindhyan region, and not necessarily to racial affinity

The Turanian theory of the origin of the Dravidians has been criticised on various grounds The progress of philological enquiry and the new means of analysis furnished by the great German writers on language have shown the error of this classification

Both philology and ethnology stand in the way of the Turanian theory The objection raised against the Mongolian theory is also applicable in the present case The Dravidians are a dolicocephalic race They are akin to the Aryans and not Brachycephalic According to Pandit Savirirayan, "The physical characteristics of the Tamilian type are a dolicocephalic head, unmarked cheek bones, long, black and curly hair, black and bright eyes, pointed, if not aquiline nose, fair skin-the colour of it being fairer than number 28 of Broce's colour types These are the characteristic features of all South Indian' castes or tribes that are admittedly Tamilian " These Aryan-like features can hardly have existed in a community which had migrated from the Mongoloid region The study of the morals and literature of the Tamils and Turanians shows the same thing The Turanians were a people who had hardly any literature, morals or aspirations of a civilised race A large number of them belonged to the lowest strata of humanity They were People whom no nation acknowledges as its kinsmen, whose languages seem absolutely incapable of expressing the concepts of the intellect or the higher forms of consciousness, whose life seems confined to

the glorification of the animal wants with "a hope in the future and no pride in the past They are the people whose language has 20 names for murder but no name for love, no name for gratitude and no name for God Certainly such a race could not be the progenitor of one which produced one of the most copious, refined and polished languages spoken by men and a literature not less copious or noble than Greek, Latin or Sanskrit

According to another theory, the Dravidians were Semitic in origin One proof in support of this view is the institution of Marumakkattayam law which prevails in Arabia, Egypt, Asia Minor and ancient Greece The Marumakkattayam and worship of women is a common feature of Semitic and Dravidian cultures and that shows that the Dravidian culture must have got it from Semitic culture Critics of this view point out that the Dravidians are more Semitic in their anthropological features Their language is also more similar to the Aryan language The worship of women and matriarchy is universal rather than a Semitic institution The Semitic theory is more one of omission than of commission The arguments on which it is based can be given not only to, prove Semitic origin but also to support the Mediterranean race theory also

The Mesopotamian Theory

Col Holdich is an advocate of the theory of Mesopotamian origin of the Dravidians According to him the Dravidians originally occupied some region in the vicinity of Mesopotamia They migrated from to the Indian borderland through the Makran coast To quote him, "Some of them remained for centuries either in the coastline where they built strange dwellings and buried each other in earthen pots or they were entangled in the mass of frontier hills which

back the solid Kirthar range and stayed there till a Turko-Mongol race, Brabuis overlaid them and Intermingling with them, preserved the Dravidian language, but lost the Dravidian characteristics The Brahuis were a Mongol race who conquered the old Dravidians but who, on account of the vitality and persistency of the Dravidian tongue, adopted the latter The Dravidians of India entered India by the Western gateways

The Egyptian theory

According to this theory, the Dravidians belonged to the as the ancient Egyptians Bruce Foote writes, "They are certainly Mongoloid in their appearance Might they not possibly be representatives of the brown race described by Prof Elliot Smith F R S in his book 'The Ancient Egyptians? Could they not be a branch of that race which migrated eastward before the invention of the copper axes which enabled the Egyptians to subdue so many of their neighbours ? The copper weapons were certainly un-known to the early Dravidians in Southern India who, it would appear lived in a purely neolithic time, for in several hundred neolithic site that I examined closely I found not the ghost of anything made of an metal whatever "

The view of Prof Elliot Smith is that the ancient Egyptians were the authors of the world's heliolithic culture According to him, the civilisations of India, Further Asia, Malaya Archipelago, Oceania and America owed the essential elements of their culture to the migrations of the Egyptian mariners The culture spread by these mariners was a blend of the cultures of Egypt, Phoenicia, Eastern Mediterranean, East Africa, Sudan, Arabia and Babylonia, that Indian influences in turn affected the civilisations of Burma, Indonesia, the Eastern Littoral of Asia and Oceania

Prof Perry also supports the view of Elliot He traces all civilisations to Egypt According to him, even the culture of Sumer and Elam was Egyptian in origin

Critics point out that the chronology on which this theory is based seems to be shaky Prof Elliot Smith assigns it to from 3000 to 800 B C and Prof Perry to about 2600 B C The influence of Egypt is not denied but it is doubtful whether we can attribute such a late and definite period as 800 B C for the expansion of this culture There is also the question put by F J Richards "Is it possible for the migrations of a few mariners to affect the customs of indigenous people as deeply and minutely as the evidence indicates ?" The view of Richards, is that the influence is too universal and many-sided, too complex, profound and intensely domestic to be regarded as due to mere cultural drift at the instance of a few mariners

Mediterranean theory

According to this theory, the Dravidians were connected with the Mediterranean people Richards says that the Dravidians were identical with the Mediterranean race which formed the ethnic basis of the major portion of civilised Europe and included the ancient Egyptians, Berbers, Cretans and the people of Mesopotamia "The resemblances between Dravidian India and the Mediterranean area are too numerous and essential to be ignored " Dr Slater also believes that a branch of the Medi- terranean race passed through Mesopotamia and Baluchistan to India long before the dawn of the Sumerian civilisation and evolved the Dravidian race and culture

A majority of scholars are of the opinion that the Dravidians were not autochthons They were immigrants into India some time about the close of the paleolithic and the commencement of the neolithic era

This view differ from the conclusion of a few and even ethnologists, anthropoligists and even linguists not to speak of a set of Indian writers who seem to think India is by itself a humiliation and should not be accepted The immigration of the Dravidians into India during the general expansion of the Mediterranean race involves no humiliation to India On the other hand it connects the Dravidian race with all those races which have won laurels The researches of ethnologists and anthropologists are totally against the theory of the identification of the Dravidians with those peoples of India Who had preceded them The view of Risley is that the whole of India was originally occupied by a race of People called the Dravidians As a result of the later migration and intermixtures, India came to have seven distinct ethnological groups of the Aryan, the Scythian, the Dravidian, the Aryo-Dravidian, the Scytho-Dravidian, the Mongoloid and the Mongolo-Dravidian The key to the whole theory is found in his assumption of the Dravidian as the aboriginal race

The theory that the Dravidians were the earliest inhabitants of India 'Was held by writers, both before and after Risley Dr Macleane was one of them The methods of investigation and conclusions followed by Risley have been subjected to considerable revision in the light of later anthropological evidences gathered since Risley wrote his Report The view of modern scholars is that anthropological data give a clue to the existence of a Pre-Dravidian, aboriginal element in India Risley did not distinguish the pre-Dravidians from the Dravidians on account of his assumption that all had the same Physical features, customs and cultures Risley's theory in regard to the Scythians is vague and has been superseded by it more critical study of the branchycephals of North-West and West

India Risley's- inclusion of the Bengalis under the Mongoloid type is regarded untenable because though the Bengalis are broad headed, they do not possess the other and more distinctive features of the Mongolians

It is clear from above that the Dravidian problem is a brain taxing puzzle which' faces the students of Indian history Many scholars have devoted a lot of time to find out the original home of the Dravidians In spite of the various excavations and hair-splitting analysis of archacological rubbishes, no Positive conclusion regarding the original home of the Dravidians has been arrived at The multiplicity of evidences, both archaeological and linguistic, have created a mist around the real crux of the problem The final conclusion is that all evidence on the Dravidian problem take us nowhere There is no clear-cut place from which the Dravidians came

Bishop Caldwell says that the Dravidians "had kings who dwelt in Strong houses and ruled Over small districts of the country They had Minstrels who recited songs at- festivals, and they seemed to have had alphabetical characters written with a style on Palmyra leaves and a bundle of leaves was called a book, they acknowledged the existence of God whom they styled Koor King-a realistic title known to orthodox Hinduism They created to his honour a temple which they called Ko-il Cods House They had laws and customs but no lawyers or judges Marriage existed among them They were acquainted with the ordinary metals with the exception of tin, lead and zinc, with the planets which were ordinarily known to the ancients with the exception of Mercury and Saturn They had medicines, hamlets and towns, canoes, boats, and even ships, no acquaintance with any people beyond the sea, except in Ceylon, which was then, perhaps, accessible on foot at low water, and

no word expressive of the geographical idea of island or continent They were well acquainted with agriculture and delighted in war They were armed with bows and arrows, with spears and swords All the ordinary or necessary arts of life, including spinning, weaving, and dyeing, existed among them They excelled in pottery, as their places of sculpture show

The Dravidians were mystics and given to speculation Temple worship which was not an essential part of Vedic religion, was a necessary part and parcel of Dravidian worship Temples were called Kovil or Kovil and the Devadasi system was also prevalent In all probability, the Tantric worship was of Dravidian origin Siva and Shakti were worshipped They were considered as the cause of the Universe The Shakti or Mother is the Supreme Creatrix of this material world The Supreme Mother Uma or Ma and her counterpart Siva or Sambhu are Dravidian deities In all likelihood, the Linga worship originated with the Dravidians The pattern of Dravidian faith became the basis of modern Hinduism

The social system of the Dravidians was matriarchal Women and children constituted the nucleus of the family Lineage was counted from the line of the mother Society was divided into groups, each having a totem of its own "Totemism is an institution in which a group of people think that they are in some way or other intimately connected with an object of nature, generally a particular animal but sometimes other things as well" The Dravidians were gifted craftsmen They enjoyed all material comforts They were not semi-savages or barbarians They were an agricultural people They built huge dams for irrigation They built fortified cities, broad roads and manufactured a variety of articles They traded with distant countries The art of navigation was highly

developed, They built durable ships "They were acquainted with the ordinary metals, with the exception of tin, lead, zinc, with the planets which were ordinarily known to the ancients with the exception of Mercury and Saturn They had medicines hamlets and towns, canoes, boats and even small ships they were armed with bow and arrows, with spears and sword All the ordinary spinning, weaving, and dyeing existed among them They excelled in pottery "

Scholars point out that the Puja ceremonies along with flowers, leaves, fruits and water are the result of the, Dravidians Aryans were accustomed to the Homa rites or sacrificial fire In course of time, the I Puja rites were adopted by the Hindus also According to Prof Mark Collins, the Sanskrit word Puja was a Dravidian Pu or flower If Homa was a Pasu-Karma or a religious service involving the slaughter of animals, Puja was a flower ritual or flower service According to Charpentier, the word Puja has been derived from a Dravidian root called Puru which means "to smear" The smearing of sandal paste or blood forms an important item in the Puja ceremony

The name Shiva is at least partly of Dravidian origin In the Dravidian language, Shivan means red and this God was described by the Aryans as Nila-Lohita or "the Red One with blue Shiva is stated to have drunk poison and kept the same in his throat which became blue Shambhu is another title of Shiva and this is compared to the Tamil words Sheubu or Chempu which means copper or the redmetal Likewise, the Vedic God Rudra has been identified with Shiva

The Dravidian God Murukan is stated to resemble Kumara or Skanda the son of Shiva The worship of

the Linga was also due to Dravidian influence Garuda as the vehicle of Vishnu is partly a divine eagle of the Aryans and partly of the Dravidians The worship of the Monkey-God was also borrowed from the Dravidians

According to Wheeler, "The religion of the Dravidian people, which lies under the crust of Brahmanism, is interesting from its extreme simplicity " 'Snake worship', says Balfour, is general throughout Peninsular India, both of the sculptured form and of the living creature The sculpture is invariably of the form of the Nag or cobra, and almost every hamlet has its serpent deity Sometimes this is a single snake, the hood of the cobra being spread open Occasionally the sculptured figures are nine in number, and this form is called the 'Nao nag, and is intended to represent a parent and eight of its youngs, but the prevailing form is that of two snakes twinning in the manner of the 'Esculapian rod' Speaking of the village gods, Meadows Taylor says "The worship of Grama Devatas or village divinities, is universal all over the Dekhan, and indeed, I believe throughout India These divinities have no temples or priests Sacrifice and oblation are made to them in sowing time and harvest, for rain or fair weather, in time of cholera,' malignant fever or other disease or pestilence The Nag is always one of the Grama Devatas, the rest being known by local names The Grama Devatas are known as heaps of stones, generally in a grove or quiet spot near every village, and are smeared some with black and some with red colour

4

The Harappa Culture

When a new civilization was discovered at Mohenjodaro and Harappa by Sir John Marshall, the then Director-General of Archaeology in India and his colleagues in the 1920's, it was given the name of the Indus Civilization. As a matter of fact, Sir John wrote three big volumes on the Indus Civilization. Later on, Dr. Mortimer Wbeeler, another Director-General of Archaeology in India, wrote a book on the Indus Civilization which is a supplementary volume to the Cambridge History of India. However, when objects similar to those found at Harappa were found at Rupar at the foot of Simla hills, at Alamgirpur in Meerut District, Kalibangan in Rajasthan, Lothal and Surkotada in Gujarat, it was considered desirable to name it as Harappa Culture as the new sites are not covered by the Indus river and its tributaries. The present position is that while some writers continue to call it the Indus Civilization, others prefer to call it the Harappa Culture.

The discoveries at Harappa in the Montgomery District of the Punjab were made by Rai Bahadur Dayaram Sahni and at Mohenjodaro, about 400 miles further down in the Larkana District of Sind, by R.D. Banerjee and K. N. Dikshit of the Indian Archaeological Department. The ruins at Harappa were for the, first time observed by Burnes and Masson, but they were professionally examined for the first time by Cunningham in 1873. He saw that they were the most

extensive of the old sites along the river Ravi Already railway contractors had done havoc in the sites and the excavations of Cunningham were less valuable than they would have been if they had been carried out earlier Cunningham's finds included late relics like Kushan coins as well as earlier ones like long flint scrapers and specimens of archaic pottery

The next discoveries in this region were made in 1904-5 in the village of Nal in Kelat State, Baluchistan Those finds consisted chiefly of painted pottery The valuable clues afforded by these archaeological finds directed the energies of Sir John Marshall and his Department on further investigations An expedition was despatched under Mr H Hargreaves to Baluchistan to discover more remains of the age Experimental aeroplane surveys were carried out along some 50 miles of the old bed of the river Ravi on which Harappa stands and new unknown sites were brought to light some of which were contemporary with Harappa Work on Harappa site was done by M S Vats from 1921 to 1934 Further excavation work on this site was done by Sir Mortimer Wheeler Excavation work was done at Mohenjodaro by Sir John Marshall and his colleagues from 1921 to 1927 It wag later or continued by J H Mackay from 1 927 to 1931 Work was also done on this site by G F Dales in 1963

Mohenjodaro (Mound of dead) is the local name of a high mounted situated in the district of Larkana It is about 300 miles north of Karachi The surrounding region is fertile and even now it is called Nakhlistan or the Garden of Sindh"

It is believed that there was a city about 5000 years ago which was destroyed and rebuilt not less than seven times Although only seven distinct town-

levels have already been unearthed D Wheeler believes that evidence of even other civilization might be lying beneath them The city as it stands today, is on two mounds One is 1300 yards long and 600 yards wide and the other is 400 yards long and 300 yards wide It is possible that the city remained in ruins for a considerable period before a new city was built on the old remains Many centuries must have passed before the site was finally abandoned

About 80 miles south of Mohenjodaro and about half a mile south of the village of Jamal-Kirio, three adjacent mounds or tells constitute an ancient site known as Chanhudaro This site was discovered in 1931 and certain objects similar to those of Harappa were found

In 1935-36, further work was carried out Three building levels were found in association with the Harappa culture and above them, two successive cultures similar to those of Jhukar and Khaugar sites of Sindh were found

Excavaiton work was done by the Department of Archaeology of the Government of India at Rupar in the Ambala District Things found there were similar to those found at Harappa Excavation work was also done at Rangpur, Surkotada and Lothal in Gujarat There was similarity in the construction of graves at Rangpur and Harappa

It is contended that the excavations at Rangpur fill up the gap between the Harappa culture and the Buddhist period Unlike Mohenjodaro where civilization is said to have met with a sudden end, at the Rangpur site the Harappa culture died a natural death and was succeeded by a post-Harappa culture From Lothal have been found 107 seals and sealings with Indus script from a kiln Other antiquities from

the site include beads of gold, steatite, cornelian and faience, a vessel, fish hooks, arrow heads of copper, terracota, animal figurines and toys, chert blades, ivory objects and pottery used for domestic and funerary purposes

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The Aryans

The original home of the Aryans is a matter of great controversy and in spite of the lapse of time and the researches of scholars from time to time, there does not exist any unanimity of opinion However, it is desirable to refer to some of the important theories regarding the original home of the Aryans The most important theory which held the field for a long time was that the Aryans originally lived in Central Asia In his "Lectures on the Science of Languages" Professor Max Mueller, a great German scholar of comparative languages, pointed out that the ancestors of the Indians, Greeks, Persians, Romans, Germans and the Celts must have lived together originally This was reveal by a study of languages of these people The Pitri and Matri in Sanskrit were the same as the Pidar and Madar in Persian, Father and Mother in English and the Patar and Matar in Latin These were not trade terms but fundamental words of cveryday use in families which could have been adopted only if the ancestors of these people lived at one common place The view of Max Mueller was that the main stream of the Aryans flowed towards the North West The Aryans of Europe migrated by a route South of the Caspian through Asia Minor to Greece and Italy One of their groups came to India through the North-West passage

In support of the theory, it is also pointed out that the people speaking the Indo-Germanic group of

languages were spread over an area ex tending from the Brahmaputra, to the Atlantic The languages of the Vedas and Zend-Avesta have changed the least but the Celtic languages have changed enormously

The original home of the Aryans must have been nearest to the lands occupied by the Indians and the Iranians and that probably was Central Asia There is also a tradition in the Zend-Avesta that the first creation of man took place in Airyana Voejo and from there the Iranians went to Iran Most of the places connected with Airyana Voejo are situated in or about Central Asia This view is also supported by a study of the comparative languages which shows that the original home of the Aryans was a region "where trees like birch and pine grew and where winter was familiar with its snow and ice " A language called Tocharian, which is spoken in North-West Afghanistan, is allied to Centum which is a Western and European language A Babylonian tablet of 2100 B C shows that the horse was newly introduced among the ass-using people of Babylon It is mentioned as "an ass from the East "or "from the mountains " From this it is concluded that it refers to the coming of the people from Iran or beyond who founded the Kissite dynasty of Babylon According to Rapson, this refers to the eruption of Aryans from the North-East Central Asia was the breeding place of the Tartar hordes who later on went to India, Persia, the Euphrates Valley and Europe, This region could have been also the original home of the Aryans The words for salt and sea are not common to the various Aryan languages and from this it is concluded that the original home of the Aryans must have been an inland country Central Asia possesses all those things which are considered necessary for specialization in language and culture Those things are vast plains undivided by

mountains, deserts or forests, abundance of food and a temperate climate

Critics point out that it is improbable that the Aryans with such a superior civilization could have been cradled in one of the most barren tracts of land in Asia However, it can be pointed out that the Central Asia of the Aryans must have been different from what it is today The climate of this region has changed even during the historic times It is the testimony of the geologists that there has been a decrease in rainfall in this region and consequently agriculture has also been affected The regions which were described as fertile by ancient writers are at present deserts Sir Aurel Stein has shown that there was a great civilization in Chinese Turkistan, but that is not the case today Even Hiuen Tsang referred to a flourishing civilisation in Central Asia when he came to India during the 7th century A D

The late Bal Gangadhar Tilak was of the opinion that the original home of the Aryans was the Arctic region The Arctic Home of Aryans Working, on the theory that the earth is losing heat day by day, Tilak came to the conclusion that the North Polar regions were at one time habitable areas and the Aryans originally lived there Tilak critically ransacked the Sanskrit, literature and came to the above conclusion The Vedas refer to days and nights lasting for six months which are to be found in the Arctic region The varying and continuous Ushas which are divided into several parts with elaborate rites are stated to be the same as the perpetual day of the astronomers The movements of the stars of the Polar region are also described in detail to support the view It is pointed out that the horizontal movement of the stars is a peculiar experience of the Polar region The books of the Iranians point out that the original home of 'the

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According to Swami Dayanand Saraswati and Pargiter, the original home of the Aryans was Tibet The view has been expounded by them in the Satyarth Prakash and Ancient Indian Historical Traditions respectively

Those who support the Indian origin of the Aryans point out that the Europeans and Iranians must have migrated from India The Vedas were composed in India and exist in India The modern structure of Indian society and religion can be directly traced from the Vedic institutions Neither in the Vedas nor in other Sanskrit literature do we find any tradition which refers to the immigration of the Aryans into India had come from another country, there ought to have been some tradition about the same However, the critics of the theory of Indian Origin of the Aryans point out that the things with which the early Aryans were familiar were not Indian They were familiar with the birch, pine, oak and willow and these do, not grow on the plains They were not aquainted with rice, tiger, lion, elephant and banyan tree They considered the elephant to be a strange animal and called it a Mriga (deer) with a Hastin (trunk) According to Lassen, "None of the phenomena of speech, customs or ideas observable among the other cognate nations indicate an Indian origin " According to Schlegel, the Aryans spread over so large a part of the world that they could not have come from its Southern extremity They must have started from a central place in various directions It is also pointed that if the Aryans originally inhabited India, they ought not to have migrated from this fertile region to less hospitable places like Iran and Europe

According to another view, the West Baltic coast was the home of the Aryans This view is based on the ground that the oldest and simplest artifacts of the

period following the palaeolithic age and the tasteful and technically perfected stone implements are found there in abundance However, critics point out that in that case the large number of beautiful stone artifacts of New Zealand should give a high degree of antiquity to the Maori culture

According to Nehring, "Tripolje culture is the culture of the original Indo-Europeans and the Indo-Europeans' original home lay indeed also in South Russia, but extended far beyond to the West "

On the basis of his substratum theory that a later language is always fundamentally modified by the older language over which it spreads, Pokorny came to the conclusion that "as the original home of the Indo-Europeans before the dispersal of the tribes (C 2400 B C) should be regarded the wide stretches of land between the Weser and the Vistula and beyond these up to White Russia and Volhynia " The region indicated as the cradle of the Indo-Europeans is a very wide one

According to Brandenstein, the undivided Indo-Europeans lived originally in what is now called the Kirghiz steppe, from where the Indo-Iranian tribes moved eastwards and the other tribes at a later date westwards The tribes that moved towards the West were divided into two groups One of them went to north Europe and the others went to Ukraine etc

German scholars have proposed Germany as the original home of the Aryans However, this view is rejected on the ground that in pre-historic times and long afterwards that country was covered with forests Sigmund Feist has proved that the Germans, though they knew an Indo-European dialect, did not belong to the Indo-European stock

According to Morgan, the cradle of the Indo-Europeans was in Western Siberia According to his view, the population of Siberia poured out both towards the Danube and towards Iran and the Far East As Siberia became colder, the inhabitants of the steppes were forced to emigrate

Jairazbhoy points out that Aryans speaking the language of the Vedas are remembered in a late tradition as having descended from common ancestors of the Kashyapa who lived in Saka-Dwipa or Western Region, probably bordering the Caspian The Saka-Dwipa of the Puranas has been connected with the Saka Tyaiy Taradraya, i e, "the Scythians that are beyond the sea," in the Nakshi Rustum inscription of Darius The Greek author Aristeas from Prokonnesus (7th century B C) told of a great "Volkerwanderung" in the 8th century B C starting somewhere in the heart of Asia and resulting in the Scythians turning westward invading the South of Russia and ousting the Cimmerians The Aryan invasion of a millennium earlier may have arisen in a similar fashion We must not omit to compare the later parallel of the Sakas and Kushans pouring out of Central Asia into India and of the Hunas crossing the Volga into Europe The Avesta knows the beginning or the source of the Aryans as Airyana Vaego The Avestan Vaego corresponds to the Sanskrit Bij meaning "beginning or source " The Avesta describes it as a place of extreme cold that became over-crowded From the description in Avesta and the Pahlavi Bundehash, J D Nadir Shah has claimed that the site of the Airyana Vaego, the birth-place of the primitive Aryans, was to the South-eastern foot of the Caucasus

Jairazbhoy is of the view that whether the Mitannian Kings (1475-1280 B C) on the upper Euphrates were a direct off-shoot of the Aryans or not,

their names are certainly Aryan, for example, Saussater, Artatama, Sutarna, Tusratta and Mattiuaza Aryan Chief also rules in the Near East, since we find in the Amarna letters (1380-50 B C) such names as Artamanya and Suwardata These names come from a dialect closely allied to Iranian A name, such as Sunassura, King of Kizwatna, is claimed to be an Indian name related to Sura as well as Avestan Sura, "strong, brave, hero " Indian etymologies were gradually found for the other names, such as, Abiratta = old Indian Abhiratha, "owner of a superior chariot" and Artassumara = Ritasmara, "remembering the sacred law "

The view which is accepted in the West is that the original home of the Aryans was in South-East Europe According to Professor MacDonell the common trees like the oak, the beech and the willow and the common animals like the horse and the cow with which the ancestors of the Aryans were familiar, as is shown by a study of the Rigveda and Zendavesta, could be found in those days in South-Eastern Europe. According to Dr Giles, the original home of the Aryans was "the area which is bounded on its eastern side by the Carpathians, on its south by the Balkans, on its western side by the Austrian Alps and Bohmer Wald, and on north by the Frzgebirge and the mountains which link them up with the Carpathians," i e , the plains of Austria and Hungary The ancestors of the Indians Greeks, Germans and English lived originally at some common place According to Dr Giles, when they were all living at one place, they were known as "Wiros " They lived together for a pretty long time They knew the art of agriculture and called themselves as Arya or Airya The words Arya or Airya mean the persons living on agriculture or persons of good family The Aryans of India came to be known as the Indo-

Aryans Expansion of Aryans in India Dr Hoernle has put forward his theory of double invasion of India by the Aryans The first horde of the Aryans came to the Punjab and settled there They came along with their families Then came their second invasion As they found the route by the Kabul Valley blocked, they pushed their way through Gilgit and Chitral and entered like a wedge into the Midland country which extended from the Himalayas on the north to the Vindhyas in the south and from Sirhind in eastern Punjab in the west to the confluence of the Yamuna and the Ganges in the cast The second group developed- its system of sacred rites on the banks of the Saraswati, the Yamuna and the Ganges The result was that the Punjab which was inhabited by the first group came to be considered as an unholy land and the land between the Saraswati and Drishadwati, i e , Brahmavarta, came to be considered as the holyland The theory of Dr Hoernle is based on a study of the Indian languages According to him, Punjabi, Rajasthani and eastern Hindi belonged to the first group of invaders and western Hindi as the language of the second group of invaders

The theory of Dr Hoernle has also been supported by Sir George Grierson who was the Director of the Linguistic Survey of India and as such possessed a unique knowledge of Indian languages His conclusion was that there was a world of difference between the western Hindustani and such languages as Sindhi, Kashmiri, Marathi, Bengali, Bihari, Assamese and Oriya which were otherwise closely related to one another To quote him, "In fact, at an early period of the linguistic history of India, there must have been two sides of Indo-Aryan dialects, one the language of the midlands and the other the group of dialects, forming the outer-band It is concluded from above

that the Aryans entered India in two separate distinct bands "

It is also pointed out that "it is difficult to account for the marked divergence of type that distinguishes the people east of Sirhind from those of the Punjab Had there been no distinct incursion coming in like a wedge, no such sharp contrast would be discernible One type would melt into she other by imperceptible gradations and scientific observations and popular impressions would not concur as they had in affirming that a marked change takes place somewhere about the longitude of Sirhind

C N Vaidya also comes to a similar conclusion by his, study of the Epics According to him, the Pandavas and their kinsmen represented the second band of invaders and the battle of Kurukshetra wass the victory of the second group over the first group, The system of polyandry was prevalent among as they could not bring their with themon account of the difficulty of the passage through which they came to India The physical differences between the people of the Punjab and those of the Gangetic Valley point out to the similar condition

However, professor Rapson has criticised the theory of two invasions of these words "The theory is made improbable by the difficulties of the route suggested and some of the arguments advanced in its favour are demonstrably mistaken There is no such break of continuity between the tribes of Rigveda and the peoples of later literature as it pm supposes Both of the facts mentioned above-the abrupt transition from the Indo-Aryan to the Indo-Dravidian type and the extension of Aryan influence from Brahmavarta to Brahmarshidesa-are best understood if we remember the natural features which

connect the plain of the Indus with the plain of the Ganges This is the strait of habitable land which lies between the desert and the mountain It is in this strait that the decisive battles on which the fate of India had depended have been fought, here too we may suppose that the progress of racial migrations from the north-west in pre-historic times must have been checked Both politically and ethnologically it forms a natural boundary In the age of the Rigveda, the Aryans had not broken through the barrier though the Jumna is mentioned in a hymn as though a battle and been won on its banks It was only at some later date that the country between the upper Jumna and Ganges and the district of Delhi was occupied The epoch of Indo-Aryan tribal migration was definitely closed It was succeeded by the epoch of Indo-Aryan colonisation "

Professor Chanda has given a new theory of his own According to him, the early Aryan invaders belonged to the dolichocephalic brand and they occupied the greater portion of Hindustan The later Aryan invaders belonged to the brachy-cephalic brand When they found their way blocked by the early invaders, some of them managed to reach the lower Gangetic plain by crossing over the table-land of - Central India and others went to Kathiawar and ocean Chanda's theory has been criticised by Barnett He points out that Chanda's theory does not explain the pre-dominance of the long headed people of the Punjab It also does not account for the change of head form towards broadness from the Punjab to the Gangetic Valley There is- also a gradual change in the form of the head and nose from the Yamuna to the lower Gangetic Valley There are also diversities between the people of Kashmir, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Bengal although they are stated to belong to the

that the Aryans entered India in two separate distinct bands "

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If the Aryans occupied the north of India by a policy of conquest that was not so in the case of south India Our knowledge of the Epics tells us that the Rishis or sages played an important part in this matter As a matter of fact, Aryan penetration into the Deccan was troubled a lot and sometimes they had to seek protection from the Kshatriya rulers, they continued their work of peaceful penetration' into the Deccan and ultimately succeeded in their mission The Brahmans of the Deccan still retain memories of their migration from the north However, as the number of the Aryans who went to the Deccan was not very large and as the people were not completely Aryanised, the Dravadian culture remained dominant in that region Even the little influence was there in the Deccan must have lessened after the Muslim conquest of northern India and the overthrow of the Hindu power

It is maintained that with the expansion of geographical horizon, a new era of history began The first important change was demographic The settlers were small in number and they were warriors and priests Their subjects were mostly local inhabitants or a mixed group of the old Vaisyas and the local people There were Sudras who were cultivator and artisans Their economy underwent a change Pastoral pursuits became less important and agrarian occupations became more important Forests were cleared by burning them The virgin soil yielded bumper crops There were plenty of rainfalls

In the cast, Magadha was endowed with metals There was plenty of iron and copper Iron provided better and more efficient tools to artisans The ploughs replaced the harrow Industrial and agricultural produce increased The military class acquired weapons which gave them superiority over the masses

The differentiation between the higher and lower classes based on colour became rigid Their functions became stratified into castes The sacrifices prescribed in the Vedas were grand public rites They required the services of a large number of priests Extensive arrangements had also to be made As time continued to pass, more and more precision was required in the recitation of the Mantras The result was that the priests became professional hierophants The warriors were constantly busy in wars and hence they became a hereditary fighting caste It was in this way that the three upper castes and the fourth lower caste came, into being Marriage laws were altered Strict rules of endogamy and exogamy were established To begin with, both Anuloma and Pratiloma marriages were allowed Later on, the marriage of a lower class made with the higher class family was forbidden Still later, even Anuloma marriages were frowned upon, although they never ceased completely The other Vedic occupations also hardened into castes and were accommodated in the four castes As society developed, large surpluses of agricultural produce accrued Crafts flourished and trade expanded Trade was stimulated by the opening up of the country from north to south and from east to west

6

Vedic Literature

The word "Veda" is derived from the Sanskrit root "Vid" (to know) and thus the word "Veda" means "knowledge", The Hindus consider the Vedas to be revealed books and give them the titles of Apaurusheya (not made by man) and *Nitya* (Eternal) It is contended that the Rishi wrote under inspiration from God However, it is pointed out that the Vedic hymns were composed by ancient Rishis or seers of great antiquity They were handed over by them from generation to generation When the Indo-Aryans settled down in the Punjab, the Vedic hymns were compiled into books and given their present form The Vedic hymns seem to have been written at different times by different people In some cases, women and men of low castes were the authors of the hymns The Vedas were considered to be so sacred that they were learnt by heart

Thus they came to be known as the Shruti The purity of the Vedic texts was maintained as they were considered to be sacred and not worthy to be changed by anybody Moreover, the hymns were memorised without being understood and when the people did not know their meaning

As regards the age of the Vedas, Jacobi's view was that the civilisation flourished between 4500 B C and 2500 B C According Dr Winternitz "The available evidence merely proves that the Vedic period extends from an unknown past say X to 500 B C , none of dates

1200-500 B C , 1500-500 B C and 2000-500 B C , which are usually assumed being justified, by facts Only it may be added as a result of recent researches, that 800 B C should be substituted for 500 B C and that the unknown date more probably falls in the third rather than in second millennium before Christ "

According to Kautilya, "The three Vedas Sama, Rig and Yajur constitute the triple Vedas These together with Atharvaveda and the ldhasa Veda are known as the Vedas " The ordinary definition of the Veda does not include Itihasa

The Vedic literature is divided into three periods The first period refers to the time of the Samhitas The second period refers to the time of the Brahmanas The third period refers to the Upanishdas, Aranyakas and the Sutra literature

The Samhita As regards the Samhita period, it refers to the Samhithas or texts of the four Vedas viz Rigveda Samveda, Yajurveda and Atharvaveda As regards the *samhitha of the Rigveda* it consists of 1,017 or 1,028 hymns or Suktas which have been divided into ten Mandalas or chapters according to the names of the Rishis and the subject-matter It is stated that the oldest hymns are to be found in Mandalas from 2 to 9 The first and tenth Mandalas seem to be later additions The tenth Mandala contains the Purushasukta In their hymns, various powers of nature are considered as gods and their help is asked for It gives us an insight into the political, social, economic and religious life of the people of Rigvedic India

As regards the Semaveda Samhita or the "Book of Chants " It contains 1,649 or 1 810 hymns which are meant to be sung at the time of the Soma sacrifice by a special class of Bliahmanas called Udgatris There is There is practically nothing original in this Veda With the

exception of 75 hymn the rest have been taken 'from the Rigveda Samhitha Even the 75 hymns can be 'traced in the other Vedic literature The Samveda shows that the Aryans loved music and were not merely Puritans

The Yajurveda Samhita or "The Book of Sacrificial Prayers" lays down the procedure for the performance of sacrifices There are two main texts of the Yajurveda and those are the Black Yajurveda and the White Yajurveda The White Yajurveda contains only hymns , but the Black Yajurveda contains commentary in prose in addition to the text It probable that the Black Yajurveda is older

For a long time the Atharwaveda was not considered to be a Veda However It is being so recognised at present From the historical and scientific point of view, it resembles the Rigveda However, its spirit is different There is a danger from the evil spirits and many formulae of magic to control demons and spirits have been given Probably that was due to the influence of the pre-Aryan people The Atharvaveda is divided into 20 books and contains about 73 hymns Some of time hymns are in praise of gods also

Brahmanas The Brahmanas are the first specimens of praise in the world They mark the transition from the Vedic to later Brahmanical social order They explain the meaning of the sacrifices and also the methods of performing them They are commentaries on the various hymns in the Vedas to which they are appended They are called liturgies

Each Brahmana is connected with one of the Samhitas Thus the Aitareya Brahmana and the Kaushitaki Brahmana belong to the Rigveda Samhita While the Aitareya Brahmana deals with the Some sacrifice alone, the Kaushitaki Brahmana deals with other sacrifices also Three Brahmanas are connected with the Samaveda Samhita and those are the Tandya-Malia-

Brahmana, Sadvinsa Brahmana and the jaiminiya Brahmana These Brahmanas contain a lot of information about the non-Aryans and also tell us the method by which the non-Aryans were to be admitted into the Aryan fold The Satapatha Brahmana belongs to the White Yajurveda Samhita and is the most exhaustive as the Bhrahmanas It points out the progress of culture from Kuru Panchala to Videha The Copatha Brahmana explains dearly the text of the Atharvaveda

The difference between the Brahmanas connected with the various Vedas lies in the fact that the Brahmanas of the Rigveda emphasise the importance of the work of the Hotri priest The Samaveda deals with the duties of the Udgatri priests and the Yajurveda contains the sacrifices so be performed by the Adhvaryu priests As regards their fundamentals, all the Brahmanas agree with one another to a very great extent

According to Max Mueller, "However interesting the Brahmanas may be to students of Indian literature, they are of small interest to the general reader The greater portion of them is simply twaddle and what is worse theological twaddle No person who is not acquainted beforehand with the place which the Brahmanas fill in the history of the Indian minds could read more than ten pages without being disgusted " However, according to Dr Winternitz, the Brahmanas may be unpalatable from the point of view of reading but 'they are indispensable to the understanding of the whole of the later religious and philosophical literature of the Indians and highly interesting for the general science of religion The Brahmanas are as invaluable authorities to the student of religion, for the history of sacrifice and of priesthood, as the Samhita of the Yajorveda for the history of prayer

Aranyakas The Aranyakas are generally called the "Forest book" the concluding portions of the Brahmanas

The philosophical portions of the Brahmanas have been separated for the use and guidance of the hermits living in the jungles 'The Aranyakas deal with mysticism and philosophy and not with rituals

The Upanishads According to Schopenhauer, "From every sentence deep, original and sublime thoughts arise, and the whole is pervaded by high and holy and earnest spirit Indian air surrounds us, and original thoughts of kindred spirits And oh, how thoroughly is the mind here washed clean of all early engrafted Jewish superstitions, and of all philosophy that cringes before those superstitions In the whole world there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upanishads It has been the solace of my life-it will be the solace of my death " According to Will Durant, "To our own day the Upanishads have remained to India what the New Testament is to Christendom-a noble creed occasionally practised and generally revered Even in Europe and America, this wistful theosophy has won millions upon millions of followers, from lonely women and tired men to Schopenhauer and Emerson According to Dr Winternitz, "In fact the whole the later philosophy of the Indians is rooted in the Upanishads Their doctrines formed the foundations of Badarayana The theological-Philosophical systems of Sankara and of Ramanuja whose adherents at the present day are still counted by millions, are built upon this text-book Moreover, all other philosophical systems and religions which have arisen in the course of the centuries have sprung forth from the soil of the Upanishad doctrines" Again, "The Upanishads do not contain superhuman conceptions, but, human, absolutely human attempts to come nearer to the truth and it is this which makes them so valuable to us For the historian, however, who pursues the history of human thought, the Upanishads have a yet far greater significance From the mystical doctrines of the

Upanishads one current of thought may be traced to the mysticism of the Persian Sufism To the mystic-theosophical logos-doctrine of the Neo-Platonics and the Alexandrian Christians down to the teachings of the Christian mystics Eckhart and Tauler, and finally to the philosophy of the great German mystic of the 19th century, Schopenhaue Amaury de Riencourt says "The Upanishadic era represents the zenith of India's cultural growth The early enthusiasm and joy of living of the Vedic Aryans, now firmly settled in their new land, was sobered by considerable thoughtfulness and an awareness of the deep sorrow underlying all forms of life The Indian mind began to crystallize slowly and evolve new forms of expression perhaps better suited to a more mature outlook "

The term Upanishad literally implies "sitting near " Hence, its original meaning is the sitting down of the initiated pupil near the teacher Guru for the purpose of a confidential communication of the secret doctrine (Rahasya) concerning the relation between the Creator and the created individuals The secret knowledge was not communicated to all the people but was communicated only to those who were considered to be worthy of it There are 108 Upanishads which were written by various saints and sages between 800 and 500 B C However, the ancient Upanishads are the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, Chhandogya Upanishad, Taittiriya Upanishad, Aitareya Upanishad, Kena Upanishad and Kaushitaki Upanishad

The Upanishads do not present a consistent system of philosophy contain the opinions and, lessons of many men who knew philosophy religion The fundamental doctrine which pervades all the genuine Upanishads can be summed up in the following sentence "The Universe is the Brahman, but the Brahman is the Atman " In other words, "The world is God, and God is my soul " The two

of Brahman and Atma are united in the philosophy of Upanishads, Deussen has expressed the fundamental ideal of the Upanishads in these words The Brahman, the power which presents itself to us materialised in all existing things, which creates, sustains, preserves, and receives back into itself again all worlds, this eternal infinite divine power is identical with the Atman with that which, after stripping off everything external, we discover in ourselves as our real, most essential being, our individual self, the soul This doctrine has found expression most pointedly and clearly in the Upanishad dictum which later became the confession of faith of millions of Indians, in the *Tat Twam Asi*

According to the Upanishads, the human intellect cannot understand the reality We require some other organ of perception and understanding than our senses and reason "Not by learning is the Atman (or Soul of the world) attained, not by genius and much knowledge of books Let a Brahman renounce learning and become as a child Let him not seek after many words, for that is mere weariness of tongue " Again, "The self-evident Brahman pierced the openings of the senses so that they turned outwards, therefore, man looks outward, not inward into himself, some wise man, however, with his eyes closed and wishing for immortality, saw the self behind " Before the inner reality can be felt, one has to wash away from himself all evil-doing and thinking, all turbulence of body and soul "As no water remains attached to the leaf of the lotus blossom, so no bad deed remains attached to him who knows this " "What the seeker seeks is Atman, the self of all selves, the Soul of all souls, the immaterial, the formless Absolute in which we bathe ourselves when we forget ourselves " "The essence of our self is not the body, or the mind, or the individual ego but the silent and formless depth of being within us, Atman " The conception of Atman is given in

these words in the Upanishads "This my Atman in my inmost heart is smaller than a grain of rice, or a barley-corn, or a mustard seed, or a millet grain This my Atman, in my inmost heart is greater than the earth, greater than the sky, greater than the heavens, greater than all spheres In him are all actions, all wishes, all smells, all tastes, he holds this all enclosed within himself he speaks not, the troubles about nothing, this my Atman in my inmost heart is this Brahman With him, when I depart out of this life, shall I be united For him to whom this knowledge has come, for him, indeed there exists no doubt"

The Upanishads believe in the transmigration of souls There is an effort to be released from the chain of reincarnations King Janaka asked jnavalkya, the sage, as to how a person could escape from re-birth He reply of Yajnavalkya was that such a thing could be achieved by the elimination of personal desires and union with God "As flowing rivers disappear in the sea, losing their name and form, thus a wise man freed from name and form, goes to the divine person who is beyond all

The theme of the Upanishads is the mystery of this unintelligible The questions attempted are the following "Whence are we born, here do we live, and whither do we go? Ye who know Brahman, tell us at whose command we abide here Should time, or nature or necessity or chance or the elements be considered the cause, or he who is called Purusha-the Supreme Spirit?"

There are many instructive stories and conversations in the Upanishads and it is desirable to refer to some of them In the Maitri Upanishad, it is stated that a king left his kingdom and went into the forests to practise austerities When he had practised penance for 1,00 sage came to him and the king asked him to explain to him the true nature of the Atman? The sage asked the

king to "choose other desires" However, the king expressed his disgust with the worldly desires in theft words "Sir, in this ill-smelling unsubstantial body, which is a conglomerate of bone, skin, muscle, marrow, flesh, semen, blood, mucus, tears, rheum, feces, urine, wind, bile and phlegm, what is the good of enjoyment of desire? In this body, which is afflicted with desires, anger, covetousness, delusion, fear, despondency, envy, separation from the desirable, union with the undesirable, hunger, thirst, senility, death, disease, sorrow and the like, what is the good of enjoyment of desires? And we see that this whole world is decaying like 'these gnats, these mosquitoes, this grass, and these trees that arise and perish Among other things there is the drying up of great oceans The falling-away of mountain-peaks, the deviation of the fixed Pole Star the submergence of the earth In this sort of cycle of existence what is the good of enjoyment of desires, when, after a man has fed upon them, there is seen repeatedly his return here to the earth?"

The story of Nachiketa is given in the Kathaka Upanishad According to it, Nachiketa was a youngman who saw his father giving the monks In fun, he put the following question to his father, "And me your own son, to whom will you give me?" The reply of the father was " I give you to Yama" (the God of death) The question that arose in the mind of Nachiketa was "What will Yama do with me?' Nachiketa went to the underworld in search of Yama but he was not there However, Yama returned after three days and asked Nachiketa to ask for three favours The first favour he asked was that he be allowed to return to his father and find him happy The second favour be asked was happiness for himself When he was to choose the third gift, Nachiketa thought and said thus "When a man goes away from this world, some say, 'he is there he lives, and others say, 'he is nowhere lie no

longer exists ' Answer me, Yama, what is the truth You alone can resolve my doubts Yama tried to evade the question and answered thus "Ask something else Nachiketa Choose great herds, horses and elephants Take gold and silver, posterity See my fair Apsaras sitting in ornamented chariots or playing harps and dancing Be happy with them, but do not ask me about death When Nachiketa refused everything, then Yama taught him the theory of immortality in Atman

Vedangas A reference may be made in this connection to the Vedangas The six important Vedangas are Siksha, Kalpa, Vyakarna, Nirukta, handa and Jyotisha Siksha deals with pronunciation, Kalpa with ritual, Vyakarna with gramxqar, Nirukta with etmology, Chhandawith meter and Jyotisha with astronomy Out of the six, the Siksha and Kalpa are considered to be very important

In addition to the Vedangas, we have Upavedas or subsidiary Vedas The important Upavedas are the Ayurveda, which deals with medicine, Dhanurveda which deals with the art of warfare, Gandharva Veda which weals with the art of music and Shilpa Veda which deals with architecture

Six Darsana The six schools of Indian philosophy form an important part of Vedic literature The names of the six Darsanas are the Nyaya Darsana, Vaisesika Darsana, Sankhya Darsana, Yoga Dapana, Purva Mimansa Darsana and Uttar Mimansa Darsana These Darsanas are stated to have been written between the sixth century B C at the time of Asoka, The Dajsanas are given in the form of Sutras or aphorisms which are short, definite and free from doubt The ideas of Avidya, Maya, Purusha and Jiva are common to all the systems of philosophy They all protest against the scepticism of the Buddhists and erect "a standard of objective reality and truth as opposed to eternal, unstable flux" They all believe in the creation,

maintenance and dissolution of the world Excepting the Purva Mimansa, the other systems aim at Moksha or the release of the soul from rebirths It is pointed out, that the way to attain Moksha is through Chittasuddhi or purification of mind and Nishkam Karma or disinterested activity

(1) The Nyaya Darsana was written by Gautam Rishi According to it, Tarka or logic is the basis of all studies It is the science of sciences Knowledge can be acquired by four methods and those are Pratyaksha or intuition, Anumana or inference, Upma or comparison and Sabda or verbal testimony Anumana is of three kinds, viz , Purvavat, Sesavat and Samanyato Drishtam The Nyaya Darsana discusses the problem of doubt and ascribes it to the lapse of memory, or irregularities or aberrations in recognition or perception Error is the apprehension of an object of the than what it actually is Truth reveals itself to those who have experience The soul is real and its attributes are desires, aversions, volitions, etc Consciousness cannot exist apart from the soul "as the brilliance of, the flame cannot live apart from it " The Nyaya Darshana believes in God who is full of knowledge and bliss The theory of rebirth is accepted and the people are asked to release themselves from its bondage

(2) Kanada Rishi is the author of the Vaisesika Darsana It is concerned with the padarthas which are divided into six categories Dravya or substance, Guna or quality, Karma or activity, Samanya or generality Visesha or particularity and Samavaya or inference The nine Dravyas or 'substances are earth, water, air, light, Akasha, time, space, soul and Manas Atoms are the ultimate constituents of concrete things ' Atoms cannot be destroyed All that happens is that they take a different shape There are 17 kinds of qualities Karma or activity is transient and comes to an end at one stage or the

other Kanada does not make any direct reference to God His philosophy is not a complete philosophy of the universe

(3) Kapila was the author of the Sankhya Darsana, Its fundamental principle is the dualism of Purusha and Prakriti Prakriti is developed by three kinds of Gunas, viz , Sattvi Guna, Rajas Guna and Tamas Guna

Sattva Guna is the source of good and happiness Rajas Guna is the source of activity and pain, Tarnas Guna is the source of ignorance, sloth-and apathy The world is not regarded as real It is not real in the sense that it does not exist for ever and after some time is destroyed The only thing that is eternal is Prakriti While the Purusha is eternal, the Jivas are bound by the bondage of rebirth The Sankhya Darsana does believe in the existence of God Prakriti and Purusha are independent and not dependent upon God

(4) Patanjali was the author of the Yoga Darsana A person can be liberated from the circle of rebirths by the practice of Yoga or the concentration of mind Efforts should be made to develop both the physical and spiritual sides of life Eight methods have been suggested to achieve the objective and those are Yama or abstention, Niyama or observance, Asana or posture, Pranayama or regulation of breath, Pratyahara or withdrawal of the senses, Dhyana or fixed attention and Samadhi or concentration By the practice of Hatha Yoga, body can be brought under control and made capable of bearing great strains The control of the breath has a great steadying influence on the mind The Yoga ends in Dhyan and Samadhy when a man achieves the stage of Samadhi, he loses his connection with the world, God alone is the object of meditation and alone helps us to attain our goal

(5) Jaimini was the author of the Purva-Mimansa Darsana It is mainly concerned with rituals, authority of the Vedas is accepted The self is different from the body, senses and understanding The plurality of Souls is also recognised Dharma is the scheme of right living There are two kinds of functions and those are Nitya Karma and the Kamya Karma The one is done everyday and the other is done to achieve some special object Offerings should be made to a number of deities There is no necessity of a benevolent or active God The Purva-Mimania Darsana is concerned with purely mechanical ethics and does not attack the problem of ultimately reality It is concerned only with Karmak and or the performance of sacrifices

Badarayana was the author of Uttar Mimansa Darsana He wrote 555 Sutras which are divided into four chapters The first chapter deals with the nature of Brahmana and his relation with the world and the individual souls The second deals with the objections The third discusses the ways and means of attaining Brahma Vidya The fourth deals with the fruits of Brahma Vidya and the future of soul after death

7

Rigvedic India

According to Sri Aurobindo, "The Rig Veda is the one considerable document that remains to us from the early period of human thought of which the historic Eleusinian and Orphic mysteries were the failing remnants, when the spiritual and psychological knowledge of the race was concealed, for reasons now difficult to determine, in a veil of concrete and material figures and symbols which protected the sense from the profane, and revealed it to the initiate "

The Rigveda is admittedly the oldest book in the world but there is no unanimity of opinion among scholars with regard to the age of its composition Their opinions differ not to the extent of centuries, but to the extent of thousands of years Some lay down the year 1000 B C as the earliest limit while others fix the same between 3000 and 2500 B C

The view of Max Mueller was that the Rigveda Samhita must have been completed before 1000 B C He assumed 200 years for the Brahmana period, 200 years for the Mantra period and also 200 years for the composition of the Rigveda itself In his Gifford Lectures on "Physical Religion" in 1889 Max Mueller observed "We cannot hope to fix a terminus a quo Whether the Vedic hymns were composed in 1000 or 1500 or 2000 or 3000 years B C no power on earth will ever determine It is pointed out that the supposition of 200 years for each of the different literary epochs in

the origin of the Veda is purely arbitrary and the view of Max Mueller is not accepted thew days

According to J Hertel, the Rigveda originated, not in North-Western India but in Iran and at a time not far distant from that of Zoroaster who lived about 550 B C

According to G Husing, from about 1000 B C the Indian wandered from Armenia to Afghanistan which was the scene of the Rigvedic period It is only later that they were driven further towards India Acting upon the suggestions of H Brunnhofer, Husing assumes that the King Kanita Prthusravas, whose mention is in the Rigveda, is identical with a Scythian King Kanitas, whose mention is in a Greek inscription and on a coin and who lived in the second century B C He comes to the conclusion that "the collection of these songs was not yet completed in the second century B C"

The view of Prof Jacobi is that the Rigveda must have been written in the third millenary B C He arrives at this conclusion on the basis of astronomical calculations The idea of taking the help of astronomical data contained in the Indian literature for fixing the, dates, is not a new one Ludwig made such an attempt on the basis of the eclipses of the sun He priests of ancient India who had to determine the times of sacrifices, were also the Almanac makers They had to study carefully the sky with a view to fix the times of sacrifices No wonder' we come across a lot of astronomical information in the Brahmanas and the Sutra The Nakshatras play a very important part There are passages in the Vedic literature which state that a sacrificial act is to take place "under such and such Nakshatra", i e , when the moon stands in conjunction with this Nakshatra

Both Jacobi and Tilak have arrived at the conclusion that at the vernal equinox In the Vedic texts, there are traces of an older calendar in which the vernal equinox fell in Orion (Mrigasiras) It appears that about 500 B C , the vernal equinox lay in the Pleiades and about 4500 in Orion Tilak fixes some Vedic texts as far back as the year 6000 B C Jacobi places "the beginning of the period of civilization, as the mature, perhaps even late production of which the songs of the Rigveda have come down to us" at about 4500 B C This period of civilization extends roughly from 4500 to 2500 B C Jacobi ascribes "the collection of hymns which have come down to us, to the second half of this period " The Grihysutras also tell us of a marriage custom in ancient India according to which the bride and the bridegroom had to sit on the hide of a bull till the stars became visible Then the bridegroom showed his bride the Pole Star called Dhruva and at the same time uttered the following prayers "Be constant, prospering in my house " The bride replied "Constant art thou, may 1, be constant in the house of my husband " This marriage custom must have originated at a time when the bright star stood so near the Celestial Pole that it seemed to be standing still With the gradual alteration of the Celestial equator, its North Pole moves away One star after another slowly moves towards the North Pole and becomes North Star or Pole Star From time to time, only one bright star approaches the North Pole so closely that it can be regarded as Dhruva At present, Alpha is the Pole Star of Northern Hemisphere This star cannot be meant when the Pole Star is spoken of in Vedic times as 2000 years ago this star was so far removed from the North Pole that it could not possibly be designated as the Dhruva In 2780 B C , we came across another Pole Star which merited this name At that time, Alpha Draconis stood so near to the Pole for

500 years that it must have seemed immovable to those who observed with naked eyes On the basis of this calculation, the origin of the name Dhruva and the marriage custom is placed in the first half of the third millenary B C The marriage custom is not mentioned in the Rigveda and consequently Prof Jacobi draws the conclusion that "the use of Dhruva in the marriage ceremony does not belong to that of the Rigveda, but to the following period and that, there fore, the Rigvedic period of civilization lies before the third millenary B C"

The critics of Jacobi and Tilak point out that the ancient Indians were concerned only with the position of the Nakhatras in relation the moon and not to the sun and there is not a single trace of observation of the equinoxes in the Ancient literature The possibility of one of the lesser stars in the Little Bear having been visible about 1250 B C as the Pole Star in the Indian sky cannot be ruled out It is not permissibly to draw any conclusion from the non-mention of the above mentioned marriage custom in the Rigveda as the hymns of the Rigveda may not have mentioned the marriage customs

According to another view, the conquest of the South by the Aryans must have taken place as early as seventh or eighth century B C as the Vedic Schools of Apastamba and Baudhayan are stated to have originated in Southern India With the conquest of Southern India about 700 B C, the assumption that the Indo-Aryans inhabited the northern corner of India and Eastern Afghanistan about 1200 or 1500 B C, becomes impossible It was not possible for the Aryans to conquer the whole of Northern India and also establish their states within five to eight hundred years The Aryans were divided among themselves and they had to meet strong opposition from the original

inhabitants and, therefore, their progress must have been very slow According to Oldenberg the period of 700 years is sufficient

"One should consider what 400 years have meant for the enormous plains of Northern and Southern America" Dr Winternitz does not accept the view of Oldenberg and comes to the conclusion that at least double the period must have been required for that purpose

According to Bloomfield, out of about 40,000 lines of the Rigveda about 5,000 lines are repetitions This shows that at the time when the Rigveda was composed, there must have been in existence a large number of floating lines of verse which could be incorporated by any composer of the hymns of the Rigveda The language of the hymns is much more archaic than that of the Vedic prose works The Brahmanas, Aranyakas and Upanishads presuppose not only the hymns of the Rigveda but also the spells and prayers of the other Samhitas as sacred texts of ancient times

On linguistic, literary and cultural grounds, it is assumed that many centuries must have elapsed between the period of the earliest hymns and the final compilation of the hymns into a Samhita The Brahmanas also required a period of several centuries for their origin The Upanishads also belong to different periods of times and they also presuppose generations of teachers and a long tradition In spite of this, it is to be observed that during the whole of the period of Vedic literature, the Aryans conquered only a small territory from the Indus to the Ganges If it took the Aryans centuries to conquer this small region they must have taken many more centuries to conquer the whole of Central and Southern India Under the

cırcumstances, the perıod of 700 years ıs not consıdered to be suffıcıent

According to Oldenberg, centurıes must have elapsed between earlıest Upanıshads and the earlıest Buddhıst lıterature Buddhıst lıterature presupposes not only the Vedas, but the Vedandas When Buddhıst appeared ın about 500 B C , the whole of the Vedıc lıterature was already ın exıstence, On the basıs of these facts, the begınnıng of the Vedıc lıterature can be traced back to a perıod much earlıer than that of 1000 B C

The clay tablets found from the archıves of Boghazkoı, the capıtal of the ancıent Hıttıte Kıngdom, throw some lıght on the age of the Rıgveda These dıscoverıes were made by Hugo Wınckler ın Asıa Mınor ın 1907 These tablets ınclude records of treatıes made between the Kıng of the Hıttıtes and the Kıng of Mıtanı at the begınnıng of the 14th century B C

These treatıes mentıon some gods as theır protectors The name of those gods are Mıtra, Varuna, Indra and Nasatyas The probably not later than about 1500 B C However, Oldenberg thınks that thıs dıscovery does not ȷustıfy us ın assumıng greater antıquıty for the Rıgveda He ıs of the opınıon that "these are the gods of some western Aryan trıbe akın to the Indıans, ınherıted from home common past as the Indıans on theır part had ınherıted them from the same source However, Dr Wınternıtz poınts out that the partıcular groupıng of the gods Varuna and Mıtra, Indra and Nasatyas can be traced only ın the Veda Jacobı, Sten Konow and Hıllebrandt also hold the opınıon that gods mentıoned above are Indıan Vedıc deıtıes and there ıs no possıble ȷustıficatıon for any other vıew

The famous letters from Tell el Amarna ın whıch

some Mitani prices are mentioned with names of Sanskrit form, belong to the period of the Boghazkoi inscriptions Some princes of the Kassites who ruled over Babylonia between 1746 and 1180 B C , had Sanskrit, names like Shurias (Surya) and Marytas (Marutas) In the library of Assurbanipal of about 700 B C has found a list of deities worshipped in Assyria That list includes the name of Assaramazas whose equivalent is Ahurmazda in the Zenda Avesta

According to Dr Winternitz, efforts to determine the age of the Rigveda with the help of astronomy are bound to fail as many passages in the Veda can be given many interpretations The astronomical calculations may be correct but the texts in question are not capable definite meaning They can be interpreted variously and beneficial to definite conclusion can be arrived at on the basis of those texts Veda culture can be raced back at least to the second millenary B C The linguistic facts concerning the relationship between the Vedas and the Zenda Avesta and between the Vedic language and classical Sanskrit, do not give any positive results They merely serve as a warning to refrain from dating the Vedas back to a very distant past on the strength of astronomical or geological speculations To quote Winternitz, "We shall probably have to date the beginning of this development about 2000 or 2500 B C , and the end of it between 750 and 500 B C The prudent course, however, is to steer clear of any fixed dates, and to guard against the extremes of a stupendously ancient period or a ludicrously modern epoch "

According to the Puranas, the KuTu King Parikshit was born Vayu Purana, Mahapadma Nanda began to reign 40 years before the accession of Chandragupta Maurya Prof R D Banerjee says that if

Chandragupta's accession is placed at 322 B C then the accession of Parikshit has to be placed in 1412 B C There may be very slight discrepancies in this, but the evidence of the Puranas shows clearly that in the middle of the 5th century A D It was believed in India that Parikshit lived at the end of the 15th century before Christ Parikshit is a King of the Vedic period and one of his descendants Janmejaya is stated to have performed a horse sacrifice According to the Puranas this King performed two horse sacrifices One was performed by Indrota DaivapiSaunka and the other by Tura Kavasheya

The Vedic literature does not mention the later hero-god Krishna, nor any of the hundred brothers of the Kurus or the Pandavas Parikshit and Dhritarashtra Vaichitravirva are known Prof R D Banerji says that there is ample evidence for believing that Parikshit was a real King and not the mere shadowy creation of a poet The traditional date of this king can be accepted as a basis for the approximate calculation of the date of the Rigveda If a King mentioned in the Satapatha and the Aitarey Brahmans was living in the last decade of the 15th century before the birth of Christ, in the composition of the Indian verses of the Rigveda cannot be placed at a date later than 2000 B C

The Rigveda points to a highly organised society Monogamy was the general rule, but among the princes, polygamy also practised However, polyandry was absolutely unknown The marriage was a sacred bond which could not be broken by any human action However, widows were allowed to re-marry particularly when they were without a child, "for the Rigveda recognises in full the keen desire of the Vedic Indians for a child to perform his funeral rites " Dowry was usual at the time of marriage, but sometimes

money had to be paid by a son-in-law to Purchase his bride The marriage of girls was not considered to be essential and there are references to girls remaining unmarried till late age and living with their fathers and brothers After marriage, the bride was brought to the house of the bridegroom and in her new home, she was given a place of honour She was to have authority over her aged father-in-law, mother-in-law and the brothers and sisters of her husband

The wife was the partner of the husband at the time of religious ceremonies and no ceremony was considered to be effective without her participation, Child marriage was unknown The choice of the father counted in the selection of the bridegroom but, the girl was also given a measure of independence in that matter The father had complete control over his children There is a reference to a father who blinded his son on the ground that the latter was a gambler He had a hand in the marriage of his children He was the head of the family and so long as he lived, he was the owner of his property Individual ownership of movable things such as cattle, horses and gold was recognised The right of adoption was recognised If the father had no son, the property could be inherited by a son of the daughter and not by the daughter herself

It appears that the Aryans had a high standard of morality However, according to Dr Winternitz, "We hear in the hymns of the Rigveda of incest, seduction, conjugal unfaithfulness, the procuring of abortion as also of deception, theft and robbery We need not, therefore, imagine people of the Rigveda either as an innocent shepherd people, or a horde of rough savages, nor on the other hand, as a people of ultra-refined culture The picture of culture which is unfolded in these songs shows us the Aryan Indians as an active,

joyful and war-like people, of simple and still partly savage habits "

The unit of social formation was the family which consisted of several members under a common head who was called the Kulapa Many families were combined together and they constituted a Grama or village under a headman known as the Gramani

8

Age of Dharma Sastras

A study of the Dharma Sastras gives us a lot of useful information regarding the social, economic, religious and political life of the people of those times There are many Dharma Sastras but the important ones are those of Manu, Vishnu, Yajnavalkya and Narada The Dharma Sastra of Vishnu is in prose, while the others are in verse Many additions must have been made to the original Dharma Sastras from time to time

The Manusmriti The Manusmriti is the most authoritative work on Hindu law It is the basis of the Hindu law which was adopted by the Englishmen in India There were old sayings of Manu which were collected together as Manusmriti or Manava Dharma Sastra It is contended that this must have been the work of the Vedic school of the Black Yajurveda The Manusmriti refers to the Dharma Sastras of Atri, Gautama, Shaunaka and Vasishta It is referred to by Yajnavalkya and Vishnu

The geographical horizon of the Manava Dharma Sastra is confined to the region north of the Vindhyas A reference is made to the four regions of Aryan culture, viz , Brahmavarta, Brahmarishidesha, Madhyadesha and Aryavarta Brahmavarta was the territory between the Saraswati and Drishadvati Brahmarishidesh consisted of Kurukshetra, Panchala, Matsya and Shursena Madhyadesha was the territory between the Himalayas and the Vindhyas and

Saraswati and Prayaga Aryavarta was described as the region between the two mountains and the two oceans It was famous for the black antelope and the performance of the Vedic Yajnas Reference is also made to the Shakas, Kiratas, Dravidas, Yavanas, Kambojas, Pahlavas, Chinas, etc

There was no paramount sovereign in the country which was divided into a large number of states A state was called a Rashtra and its head was called the Raja and the people were known as the Praja A Rashtra was divided into Deshas, Janapadas or Vishyas The feudatories of the Raja were known as Savants The head of a Gram was known as the Gramani and above him were the Dashi, Vihshi, Shatesha and Sahasreaha These Officers were in charge of 10, 20, 100 and 1,000 villages The Gramani war, paid in the form of food, drink, fuel and vegetables The wages of the Dashi, Vimshi, Shatesha and Sahasresha were fixed according to their status

The king was the head of the state As such, he was the protector of the people He was assisted by a large number of persons known as the Sahayas He also took the advice of the Parishad whose head was called the Mukhyamatya The king was not an autocat The people were given a considerable degree of self-government in their affairs The duty of the kink was not to lay down the law of the country but merely to enforce the same The sources of law were the Vedas, the Dharma Sastras, Shila and Acharai If there was any doubt regarding the law on a particular point a council of experts called the Parishad was to be consulted by the king The Kula, Jati, Shreni and the Janapada were allowed to make their own laws and it was the duty of king not only, to recognise them but also to enforce them

The Manusmriti divides the society into two parts The Aryans and the non-Aryans The non-Aryans were called Anarya, Dasyu and Mlechchha The term Dasyu also included the Chandalas, Shvapakas, etc The non-Atyans moved about in the country and lived nearabout the cremation grounds, forests and mountains They had a large number of donkeys and dogs They were not allowed to enter a village at night Even when they entered a village in the day-time, they had to put on a particular kind of dress They were employed to hang people and also to carry the dead bodies They lived by hunting The Aryan society was divided into two parts Dvijatis and Ekajatis To the former group belonged the Brahmanas, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas The Sudras were known as Ekajatis Mixed castes also must have come into existence on account of inter-marriages, adultery and marriages with ineligible women The life of the people was regulated by the Varnashrama Dharma The Brahmanas occupied the highest place in society on account of their lofty character and spirituality They acted as teachers, priests, judges, assessors and ministers A Brahmana could degrade himself by violating the rules laid down by him but capital punishment could not be inflicted upon him He was required to live a life of simplicity, virtue and asceticism He was to have goodwill towards all The main duty of a Kshatriya was to fight -and defend the country The Vaishyas were required to attend to agriculture, trade, commerce and cattle-rearing They went on sea-voyages and were expected to add to the prosperity of the country

The Shudras formed the bulk of Aryan society Their main duty was to serve the Brahmanas, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas They were required to remove dirt, filth and carcases They could not perform

Samskara However, they could perform the Shradhas In addition to the Shudras, there were slaves and seven kinds of them have been mentioned Some of them were captured in war, some were slaves for food, some were purchased, some were inherited and some became slaves on account of debt A hereditary slave could not change his status A slave was not allowed to possess property

Women were not given a place of honour by Manu They were for- bidden to study the Vedas They were not allowed to utter the Mantras at the time of performance of Samskaras except marriage Before marriage, a girl was required to be under the control of her father or brother After marriage, she was required to be under the control of her husband After the death of her husband, she was to be under her sons She was not entitled to inherit any property except the Stridhana

Manu refers to four Ashramas, viz, Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanaprasha and Sanyas As a Brahmachari, a student was required to live a very hard life and acquire as much of education as he could Education was started after the performance of the ceremony of Upanayana This ceremony was performed at the age of 8, 11 and 12 in the case of Brahamanas, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas respectively The age could be less in the case of precocious children A student was required to live with his teacher whose duty it was to look to the spiritual and physical development of the student Every student was required to perform Sandhya and Agnihotra The subjects studied at that time were the Vedas, Brahmanas, the Aranyakas, Upanishads, Vedangas, Darshan Sastras, Dharma Sastras, etc Certain students specialised in certain lines Those who specialised in the study of the Vedas were known as the Vaidikas Those who specialised in

the study of Sastras or Vedangas were known as the Shastrins No definite period was fixed for study It varied from 9 to 36 years The various kinds of students were called Vidya-Snatakas, Vrata-Snatakas and Vidya- Vrata-Snatakas The students who devoted their whole life to study were known as Naishthikas

There were two terms of study in every year, and two different ceremonies were performed on those occasions Those ceremonies were known as Upakarama and Utsarga The students were also given holidays on certain occasions Those holidays related to Ashtami, Chaturdashis, Amavasya and Purnima in every month Sometimes occasional holidays were given on account of rains, fire, eclipse, etc There were two kinds of teachers, viz , Upadhyaya and Acharya While the Acharyas taught free, some payment had to be made to the Upadhyayas Neither the Upadhyayas nor their students were respected in society

Agriculture was still the mainstay of the people and no wonder every effort was made to develop the same The genuineness of seeds was guaranteed by punishing the guilty persons Cotton, wheat, barley, rice, sesame, sugarcane, etc , were ordinarily cultivated The agriculturists were able to produce two crops a year There are references to agricultural implements such as plough, yoke, etc The state got as a share of land- revenue one-fourth, one-eigth, one-twelfth of the produce of the land Those who did not cultivate their lands properly were punished Cows, buffaloes, sheep and goats were domesticated There was plenty of Ghee and milk

People lived in Puras, Nagaras and Gramas Their houses were made of mud, brick, stone and timber Sometimes, there were many-storeyed houses Temples were built to serve the boundary lines

The people engaged themselves in many occupations They worked as artisans, mechanics, goldsmiths, dyers, washermen, tailors, weavers, potters, blacksmiths, distillers, etc Money was used for purposes of exchange but the system of barter also prevailed The government fixed the prices of the various commodities in consultation with the traders concerned Heavy penalties were prescribed to check adulteration and false weighs and measures There was a lot of trade both within the country and with foreign countries Sometimes, the trade routes passed through jungles and marshes and the merchants were looted Goods were carried through rivers and seas also The government had control over exports It is pointed out that "the property of a trader was confiscated if he exported goods of which the king had a- monopoly or the export of which was forbidden " The taxes levied by the government were known as the Shulka A large number of pots were fixed up throughout the country to collect the tolls Ferries were maintained by the state and some charge was made for the services rendered Money was given on credit and interest was allowed to be charged at the rate of 15 per cent per annum Even higher rates of interest were allowed on unsecured loans The gold coin was known as Swarna and one gold coin was equal to 80 Krishnalas The silver currency consisted of the Krishnala, Masha, Dharna and Shatamana The copper coins were known as Karshapanas The abbreviated form of Karshapana was Pana and the smallest coin was 1 Pana The metals known to the Manusmriti were gold, silver, copper, bronze, lead, iron, tin and pewter Precious stones were also mined under the control of the government

Yajnavalkya Smriti The Smriti of Yajnavalkya is more systematic than that of Manu It is in an

abridged form but it gives new material or many points which were not discussed by Manu While Manu referred to only two ordeals, Yajnavalkya Smriti discusses at length five different kinds of ordeals There is also a lot of medical and anatomical matter Manu allowed a Brahman to marry a Sudra girl but this is condemned by Yajnavalkya While Manu condemned Niyoga, Yajnavalkya did not Manu was opposed to gambling but Yajnavalkya prescribes methods by which gambling could be brought under state control and add to the revenues of the state Manu completely ignored documentary evidence in the courts but Yajnavalkya discusses the same at length Yajnavalkya clearly defines the rights of widows, but that was not done by Manu

Yajnavalkya refers to the Vedas, Vedangas, and fourteen Vidyas He also refers to Dandaniti, Smritis, Sutras and Bhasyas If there was a conflict between Dharma Sastra and Artha Shastra, the authority of the Dharma Sastra was binding Yajnavalkya also refers to monasteries of Brahmanas which specialised in the study of the Vedas He refers to a large number of corporations such as Kula, Jati, Sreni, Gana and janapada which enjoyed autonomy in their internal affairs

Vishnu Smriti This was written after the Smriti of Yajnavalkya as many things have been borrowed in this Smriti from that of Yajnavalkya The definition of Aryavarta was not confined to the region described by Manu, but it applied to the whole of India Vishnu refers to the Samhitas of the Vedas, the Aitareya Brahmana, Purana, Dharma, Sastras, Vyakarna and the Vedangas He also refers to the practice of Sati There were to be found Kapalikas and Shudra ascetics, The people were asked not to talk with the Mlechchhas and Antyajas They were to worship

Vasudeva When the king gave gifts to people, a record of the same was prepared on a parchment or a copper plate The seal of the king was also to be fixed The coins referred to by him are Yava, Krishnala, Masha, Akshardha, Stivarna, Nishka and Dharma

Narada Smriti This Smriti was written by Narada after that of Manu Some of the verses are common between the two and the arrangement of the two books is also the same Yajnavalkya referred to five ordeals but Narada added two more Manu was against Niyoga and remarriage of women, but that was not the case with Narada He refers to fifteen kinds of slaves although Manu mentioned only seven Narada also preferred the regulation of gambling and the addition of revenues to the state Narada did not allow the widow to inherit the property of her husband The coins mentioned by Narada are the Dinaras, Panas and Karshapanas

Narada also laid down certain rules with regard to apprenticeship The students who ran away without completing the period of apprentice- slip were to be punished, Business could be continued on the basis of partnership The profits and losses of the partners were to be proportionate to their investments A reference is also made to such corporations as the Kula, Sreni, Gana Puga, Vrata, etc These cororations made their own rules and it was the duty of the king to enforce them

9

Caste System

A caste is "a collection of families or groups of families bearing a common name which usually denotes or is associated with a mythical ancestor, human or divine, professing to follow the same calling, and regarded by those who are competent to give and opinion as forming a single homogeneous community " According to Dr V A Smith, a caste may be defined as "a group of families internally united by peculiar rules for the observance of ceremonial purity, especially in the matter of diet and marriage " According to Shama Sastri, "Caste means a social exclusiveness with reference to diet and marriage Birth and rituals are secondary"

There is a difference of opinion among scholars with regard to the origin of the caste system although it is admitted that it is a very ancient institution According to Prof Raps on, the origin of the caste system is due to the distinction between the white and dark complexion of the Aryans and the original residents Originally, society was divided into two parts, the Aryans and the non-Aryans who were condemned to the Sudra class in the years to come

According to Dr V A Smith, most of the misunderstanding on the subject of caste system has arisen from the persistent mis-translation of Manu's term "Varna" as caste, whereas it should be rendered class or order or by some equivalent term The

compiler of the Institutes of Manu was aware of the distinction between Varna and Jati While he mentions about 50 castes, he refers to only four Varnas

According to Sham Sastri, the words "Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras were names of classes rather than of castes during the pre-historic period " Again, "Varna, once a common name of all caste, perhaps taken from the colour of the garments that were different with different classes, as for example, white for the Brahmanas, red for the Kshatriyas, Vaisyas yellow and black for the Sudras, came to mean a caste in post-Buddhists literature "

According to H G Rawlinson, caste is a Portuguese word meaning purity of race The original idea of caste was that of colour (Varna) The fair-skinned Aryans looked down upon the dark-skinned Dasyns

According to Dr Gokhale, the Indian terms used to describe the caste system are Varna and Jati complexion and birth The former refers to racial difference and the latter means "birth" and "descent " It was to mark off the racial difference between the Aryans and non-Aryans that the terms 'Arya-Varna' and 'Das-Varna' first came into use and they are used as such in the Rig-Veda When the Aryans came to India as invaders with radical differences in complexion, religion, customs and manners between them and the non-Aryan inhabitants, there came about the first broad grouping in the Aryan society Politically, the Aryans were the conquerors and the non-Aryans the conquered and racially the former were of a fair complexion whereas the latter were dark

According to Nesfield, the decisive factor in the growth of the caste system was professional specialisation Occupations were classified in order of

rank-hunting or fishing, stock-breeding, agriculture, manual or servile labour, trade, priesthood

According to Sir Herbert Risley, caste was a matter of race To quote him, “It is scarcely a paradox to lay down, as a law of the caste organisation, that the social status of the members of a particular -group varies universe ratio to the mean relative width of their noses ”

According to Senart, castes were grafted on to ancient “classes”—those of the Vedic age and the original united Aryans However, there is difference of opinion between class and caste Class “serves political ambition,” while caste “obeys strict scruples, traditional customs, at the very most certain local influences, which usually have no connection with class interests The two institutions may, by the reaction of systems on facts have become incorporated, but in essence they are independent ” If “the existing system of castes was fitted into old divisions of race and class which were drawn for that purpose,” it was under the influence of properly Indian conditions The fact that the Vedas do not mention the Sudras but merely refer to the Dasyus, shows that the natives were not yet assimilated Their incorporation into the Aryan fold later on was expressed by admission into a fourth caste According to Senart, Varna means the class, a group more or less dearly defined, vaguely hereditary, afterwards transformed by Brahmanic theory into those legal fictions, the four castes, whereas Jati would mean the real caste, strictly hereditary and exclusive but more concrete than the alleged “four castes ” Legislation which was well-founded only for the Jatis was transferred to the Varnas in accordance with an abstract conception which never corresponded to reality

The Brahmanas attribute a divine origin to the caste system They base their views-on the tenth Mandal of the Rigveda called the Purusha Sukta which asserts that the Brahmana was born out of the mouth of Brahma, the Kshatriya from his arms, the Vaishya from his stomach, and the Sudra from his feet As the Vedas are the revealed books and contain nothing but the truth, so the division of society as given therein is attributed to divine ordinance

To an impartial student of history, none of the above views seems to contain the whole truth The Nordic races had a sort of caste system amongst themselves Amongst the Greeks and Romans also, there existed freemen and slaves Amongst the early Iranians, some such distinctions of society existed Even the Anglo-Saxons who dominated the whole of Europe had the Earls, Ceorls and the Theowas The last group was hardly better than a Sudra These groups were based on birth Even at the present day in England and elsewhere, Counts, Dukes and Archdukes are relics of those days although the basis is not essentially the same It leads us to think that there was something in early social structure which permitted the division of society into classes Later on, when the Aryans came and settled in the Indo-Gangetic plains, both colour and occupations contributed to the development of a system which was called the caste system In other countries, the old distinctions disappeared with the passage of time, but in India certain peculiar circumstances forced the society to continue with this unnatural distinction

10

Jainism

There was a time when it was believed hat Jainism was merely, a branch of Buddhism However, it was later on found by scholars that Jainism was a separate religion by itself The earlier identity between Buddhism and Jainism was due to the fact that both religions put emphasis on the law of Karma and Ahimsa Likewise, it was believed at the beginning that Mahavira was the founder of Jainism in the same way as Buddha was the founder of Buddhism However, it is now recognised that Mahavira, was the twenty-fourth Tirthankara or Prophet of Jainism The sacred books of the Jains tell us that the real founder of Jainism was Rishabha who was succeeded by 23 Tirthankaras According to the orthodox view, Rishabha was the father of King Bharata, the first Chakravartin king of India

Parsvanath was the twenty-third Tirthankara or Prophet and fie seems to have been an historical figure According to Professor Jacobi, Parsvanath was the real -founder of Jainism According to the Kalpasutra of Bhadrabahu written in the time of Chandragupta Maurya, Parsvanath was a Kshatriya He was the son of Asvasena, King of Benaras He was married to Prabhavati, daughter of King Naravarman As a prince, he was very much loved by the people He lived as a householder for 30 years and then became an ascetic After deep meditation for 83 days, he attained the highest knowledge called Kevalam He

had eight Ganas and eight Gandharas He had a following of 16,000 Sramanas with Aryadatta as their head He had 38,000 nuns as his followers He had also 1,64,000 men and 3,27,000 women as his followers He died at the age of 100 years "on the summit of Mount Sammeta " He is stated to have lived during the eighth century B C His death took place about 250 years before the death of Malhavira

Mahavira was the last Tirthankara He is stated to have been born in a suburb of Vaisali The name of his father was Siddhartha who was the head of the Kshatriva clan called the Jantrikas Siddhartha was married, to princess Trishala, sister of Chetaka who was the ruler of Vaisali The original name of Mahavira was Vardhamana King Bimbisara of Magadha was married to Chellana, the daughter of Chetak Four other daughters of Chetak were married in royal families Prabhavati was married to King Udayana of Sindhu-Sauvira Padmavati was married to King Dadhivahana of Champa Mrigavati was married to King Satanikar of Kaushambi Siva was married to Pradyota, King of Avanti Thus Vardhamana Mahavira was well connected

According to the Kalpasutra, the father of Vardhamana, celebrated the occasion of the birth of his son on a large scale "The custom taxes and confiscations were released, the buying and selling prohibited, no policemen were allowed to enter houses, great and small fines were remitted, debts cancelled, measures and weights increased, and all prisoners set free in the town of Kundapura "

There is a lot of controversy regarding the date of birth of Mahavira, According to the traditional date, his death took place 470 years before the birth of Vikrama, whose era began 18 years later in 58 B C

According to this view, the death of Mahavira ought to have taken place in 546 B C (470+584-18) Hemchandra dates the reign of Chandragupta in 313 B C He also states that this took place 155 years after the death of Mahavira Thus, according to Hemchandra, the death of Mahavira should have taken place in 468 B C Both Mahavira and Buddha were contemporaries and only that date can be acceptable which is applicable to both According to the Buddhist tradition, Mahavira died before the death of Buddha This is dear from the following statement of Sariputta "The Nigantha, Nataputta, friends, has just died at Pava " Sariputta died before the death of Buddha It is also stated that Prasenajit told Buddha t' at Mahavira was senior to him in age

Vardhamana married Yashoda and a daughter was born to him His parents died and with the permission of his elder brother, Vardhamana became an ascetic For twelve, long years, he wandered from place to place doing penance According to the Acharangasutra "He wandered naked and homeless People struck him and mocked at him-unconcerned, he continued in his meditations In Ladha, the inhabitants persecuted him and set dogs on him They beat him with sticks and, with their feet, and threw fruits, clods of earth and potsherds on him They disturbed him in his meditations by all sorts of torments, But like a hero in the forefront of the battle, 'Mahavira withstood it all Whether he was wounded or not, he never sought medical aid He took no kind of medicaments, he never washed, did not bathe and never cleaned his teeth In winter, he meditated in the shade, in the heat of the summer he seated himself in the scorching sun Often he drank no water for months Sometimes he took only every sixth, eighth, tenth or twelfth meal, and pursued his meditations

without craving " In the 13th year "he reached Nirvana under a Sal tree near an old temple in the field belonging to a householder named Samaga on the river Rijupalika outside of the town called Jrimbhika grama, becoming an Arhata, a Jina, and a Kevalin, an omniscient "

11

Buddhism

"In the history of Indian religions, Buddhism occupies a unique place, firstly, for throwing its portals open not only to the Indians of all strata of the society, but also to the foreigners like the Indo-Greeks and Indo Scythians, who settled in India, and secondly, for its propagation in foreign countries like Ceylon and Burma, Thailand and Cambodia, Central Asia and China, Nepal and Tibet, and the Indonesian countries, and ultimately in Korea, Japan, and Mongolia Along with the propagation of the religion were introduced in those' countries the Buddhist art and architecture, language and literature and, above all, translations of the Buddhist scriptures and the subsidiary literature in the languages of the countries where the religion made its home In short the cultural heritage of India was shared by most of the Asians through the grace of the religion "

Condition of Hindu Society before Buddha

(1) The rise of Buddhism and Jainism was facilitated by the condition of Hindu society on the eve of Buddha's birth The Hindu society had lost its former glory and many kinds of abuses and superstitions had crept into it The Brahmanas had a monopoly in the field of religion and they behaved as unscrupulous human-beings They encouraged superstition and tried to extort as much as they could from the people The Vedic

idea of the divine power of speech was developed into the philosophical concept of the Mantram as the human expression of the etheric vibrations which permeate space and which were the first knowable cause of creation The 'Mantram was a Sanskrit formula composed on certain sequence of sounds and rhythms It was said to control the etheric vibration and produce effects, beneficial or otherwise, to the persons or objects concerned It was believed that a 'Mantram could bring victory or defeat in wars It ,could assure the prosperity of a state or the destruction of its enemies It could be used to win votes in the popular assembly or to silence the arguments of an opponent Either by itself alone or in conjunction with medical prescriptions, the Mantram could stop a cough or help the growth of hair It embodied in itself the dynamic principle of the universe There was no concern of daily life which could not be affected one way or the other by the Mantram

If the Brahmana priests had lived up to the high ideal of purity and altruism, the use of the 'Mantram would have been either harmless or helped the growth of moral and religious life among the people However, the Brahmanical theory of the Mantram implied that it contained in itself a divine principle and the compelling power of the deity itself The Mantram was used even by those Brahmana priests who had no great learning and who also did not possess any high moral character The use of the Mantram by unscrupulous and ignorant priests encouraged superstition among the masses and thereby acted as a hindrance to civilisation and a source of exaction and cruelty

11

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state of affairs in which the Brahmanas figured as exploiters and they themselves as their victims

(3) Another superstition was encouraged by the Brahmana priests among the people and that related to the practice of Tapas or self-torture by which it was believed that both gods and men acquired spiritual insight and command over the forces of nature Sitting between five fires or upon an ant-head in the forest and standing upon one leg and holding an arm above the head until its muscles were atrophied were considered to Le the means for establishing mastery over the physical senses and ultimately over the universe Even gods were bound to submit to the will of such people Starvation was expected to bring about similar results

(4) The Hindu religion presented a confusing mass of things which was beyond the comprehension of the man in the street The hymns of the Vedas were too difficult for them to understand and appreciate Even the Brahmanas found it difficult to interpret them The deep philosophy of the Upanishads was too difficult for the common man Even the philosophy of the Sastras and Sutras was not having any effect on the people In other words, if the masses did not understand Hinduism, they could not be expected to have any love for the same The vedic religion, with the lofty ideas and ideals of God, soul, salvation and creation of the world, was merely a rattle which did not satisfy the inner cravings of the people It was felt that there was an urgent necessity of a religion which though less deep and, profound, was understood by the people and could be made by them a part and parcel of their lives

(5) The lives of the Brahmana priests were not above reproach They lived the most worldly and corrupt lives As a matter of fact, they were becoming the very embodiment of vices That was merely a corollary of the enormous wealth possessed by them

(6) The Hindu society was suffering from the evils of the caste system which condemned the low classes or the Sudras to a life of degradation and humiliation The latter hated the superiority of the twice-born and were willing to avail of any opportunity to over-throw the predominance of those whom they hated and detested

(7) The Kshatriyas and Vaishyas also detested the supremacy of the Brahmanas In spite of their superior physical force and wealth, they had to put up with the arroganc of the Brahmanas who did practically nothing for the good of society It was in this atmosphere that Buddhism and Jainism made their appearance

12

Ancient Indian Polity

The sources of our information regarding ancient Indian polity extend over the vast field of Hindu literature Scattered passages in the Vedic literature are useful for our purpose The Rigveda gives us some material but the Atharvaveda gives much more The Yajurveda and the Brahmanas give us a lot of information regarding the coronation ceremonies and the sacrifices performed on those occasions There are also, references to the followers of the King and the sources of his income

The Mahabharata and Kautilya's Arthasastra refer to many writers on politics who preceded them According to the Mahabharata, Brahmdeva composed a big treatise on politics covering more than a lakh of verses The same was abridged later on by Siva Visalaksha, Indra, Brihaspati and Sukra References were also made to Manu, Bhardvaja and Gaurisiras On many occasions, Kautilya refers to the views of Visalaksha, Indra, Brihaspati, Sukra, Manu, Bhardvaja, Pisuna, Parasarp Gaurisiras, Vatayadhi, Ghotamukha, Katyayana, Charayana, Kanika and Kaunapadanta There were many schools among the students of politics and Manu, Brihspati, Sukra and Usanas were claimed as their founders The various works attributed to hose schools have been lost to us

The Shantiparva of the Mahabharata deals with the Rajadharma or the eiaties of the King and

government The importance of the science of politics is emphasised The various theories regarding the origin of the State and kingship are given The duties of the King and his ministers are discussed in detail A lot of space is devoted to taxation Problems of peace and war and diplomacy are discussed at length The Sabhaparva of the Mahabharata deals with the ideal of administration The Adiparva justifies Machiavellian tactics under certain circumstances The conduct of ifidividuals, in times of emergency is also discussed

According to Dr Altekar, "The Arthasastra is more a manual for the administrator than a theoretical work on polity discussing the philosophy and fundamental principles of administration or of the political science It is mainly concerned with the practical problems of government and describes its machinery and functions, both in peace and war, with an ixhaustiveness not seen in any later work, with the possible exception of the Sukraniti " problems, of kingship, The Arthasastra deals with the p the system of civil administration, civil, criminal and personal law, duties and responsibilities of the followers and retainers of the king, the problems of diplomacy, peace and war, etc Kautilya was famous as the founder of a school of politics and consequently his name was held in high esteem in succeeding generations Successful diplomats were described as the in carnations of Kautilya or Vishnugupta The authority of Kautilva's Arthasastra was so great that other works on politics were completely forgotten and that explains the dearth of literature on politics after Kautilya No wonder, it is stated that Kautilya's Arthasastra was like the Ashtadhyayi of Panini The latter work also eclipsed all other works on Sanskrit grammar

The Nitisara of Kamandaka was probably written in Gupta period It is a metrical summary of

Kautilya's Arthasastra The author was glad that he had given such a shape to the ideas of Kautilya that the same could be memoried without any difficulty However, he omitted the discussion of civil, criminal and personal law More emphasis was put on monarchy and republics were omitted The date of Sukraniti is not certain It does not deal with abstract problems of state but is concerned with the details of administrative machinery The work deals with the duties and responsibilities of the king and his ministers, and other officers, the administration of justice and the problem of foreign-policy and war

The Arthasastra of Brihaspati is a small, unimportant booklet which does not deal effectively with any subject The Nibandhakaras and the Puranas have no originality The Puranas merely copy out certain chapters from previous books on the subject The Agni Purana borrows from an author collect Pshkara The Panchatantra adopts the term 'Naya-Sastra' to denote the literature on politics The Nitivakyamrita of Soma deva was written during the 10th century A D The author refers to the views of a large number of ancient writers on politics who were known in his time The work is in the Sutra style It starts with the following words "To begin, Salutation to the State, the tree of Dharma and Artha"

With the advent of the Muslims in India, original thinking stopped among the Hindus However, a few digests on politics were prepared Some of them were Lakshmidhara's Rajanitikalpataru (c 1125), Devana-Bhatta's Rajanitikanda (c 1300), Chandeshvara' Rajanititratankara (c 1326), Bhoja's Yuhtikalataru (c 1025), Nilakantha's Nitimayukha and the Rajanitiprakasha of Mitramisra Ramachandra, a minister of Sivaji, wrote in Marathi a treatise on politics but it had absolutely no originality

13

Northern India

In order to have an idea of the political, social, religious and economic life of the people of Northern India from 6th, to 4th century B C , we have to collect and analyse the information scattered in Buddhist and Jain literature The Jatakas are particularly very useful in this matter When Buddha appeared on the scene, there was no paramount power in India India was a congeries of states whose rulers and heads were fighting among themselves for supremacy There were not only monarchies but also republics

Professor Rhys Davids in his remarkable work "Buddhist India" has given a list of 16 Mahajanpadas or states The names of the sixteen great Janapadas were Kasi, Kosala, Anga, Magadha, Vajji Malla, Chedi Vamsa (Vatsa), Kuru, Panchala, Machchha (Matsya), Saurasena, Assaka, Avanti, Gandhara and Kamboja

The Kasis were the people who had settled round Banaras Before Buddha, Kasi was more powerful than Kosala and there were frequent disputes between Kasi and Kosala Brahmadatta the king of Kasi, attacked Kosala, defeated king Dighiti, annexed it and returned it to the son of the latter After that started retaliatory invasions of Kasi by Kosala kings named Vanka, Dabbasena and Kamsa Kasi was conquered by the last named king of Kosala Kasi was ultimately incorporated into Kosala

Kosala roughly corresponds to modern Avadh in Uttar Pradesh Its capital was Sravasti The Sakyas had already acknowledged in the 7th century B C the suzerainty of Kosala It was the rapid rise of the kingdom of Kosala and the inevitable struggle between Kosala and Magadha which was the leading point in the politics of Buddha's time In the time of Buddha, Pasenadi (Prasenjit) was the ruler of Kosala He was educated at Taxila He was knowr for his charity 'He gave two towns to two Brahmanas His ministers were Mrigadhara, Srivaddha and Digha Charayana He was an admirer of Buddha The relations between Buddha, and Prasenjit are given in one of Baihut sculptures This shows that the king was a follower of Buddha Kosala had three chief cities, viz Ayodhya, Saketa and Sravasti There are references to 5 Rajas of independent clans who were ultimately merged into Kosala There were wars between Prasenjit and King Ajatasatru of Magadha After Ajatasatru was captured, he married Vajirs, the daughter of Prasenjit The conflict between the two arose out of the resumption by Prasenjit of a village in Kasi which had been given as bath money to his sister on her marriage with Bimbisara That gift was revoked by Prasenjit after the death of his sister caused by the assassination of Bimbisara by Ajatasatru The revocation of the gift led to war between the two countries In his old age, Prasenjit went to see Buddha in the Sakya country When he was away there was a revolution in Kosala and Prasenjit was forced to go to Ajatasatru for help Unfortunately, he died outside the gates of Rajagriha There were times of insecurity in Kosala and ultimately Kosala was merged into Magadha

The state of Anga roughly corresponds to the district of Bhagalpur Its capital was Champa It was annexed to Magadha in the time of Bimbisara

Magadha roughly corresponds to the present districts of Patna and Gaya Its earliest capital was Girivraja or Rajgriha The earliest dynasty of Magadha was founded by Brihadratha However, Magadha came into prominence undar Bimbisara and Ajatasatru It became so powerful that one by one all other neighbouring states were merged into it

According to Dr Rhys Davids, the Vajjians included 8 confederated clans of whom the Lichchhavis and the Videhans were the most important It was in the time of king Janaka that Videha camp into prominence Its capital, Mithila, became the centre of ' political and cultural activity of Northern India The last king of Videha was Kalara who perished along with his kingdom and relations on account, of his attempt on a Brahmana maiden On the ruins of this kingdom arose the republics of the Lichchhavis and the Videhans and six other small republics Mithila has been identified with the modern town of Janakpur

Lichchhavis were very -independent people Their capital was Vaisali The mother of Mahavira was a Lichchhavi princess Mahavira himself was born near about the city of Vaisali The Lichchhavis were followers of Buddha and Buddha also visited them on many occasions Vaisali was a prosperous town, crowded with people and having abundance of everything There were thousands of many-storeyed buildings There were many pleasure grounds and lotus ponds A triple wall encompassed the city, each wall a league distant from the next, and there were three gates with watch towers The second Buddhist Council was held at Vaisali The city has been identified with Basarh in the Muzaffarpur district of Bihar

There was a republican state of the Mallas It had

two divisions Kusinara was the capital of one division and Pava of the other Kusinara has been identified with modern Kasia near Gorakhpur Pava has been identified with modem Padrauna which is 12 miles north of Kasia The importance of the cities of Pava and Kusinara is very great in the history of Buddhism Buddha took his last meals and was taken ill at Pava At Kusinara, he died The Mallas were the great admirers of Buddha They were very brave and war-like people There are plenty of references to the Mallas in the Buddhist and Jain books Chedi roughly corresponds to modern Bundelkhand The Vamsa or Vatsa country bad a monarchical form of Government Its capital was Kausambi which has been identified with the village of Kosam, 38 miles from Allahabad Kausambi was a very prosperous city where a large number of millionaire merchants resided It was the most important entrepot of goods and passengers from the South and the West

Udayana was the ruler of this country in the 6th century B C He was a powerful and war-like king His relations with the neighbouring states were not happy He had to struggle against king Ajatasatru of Magadha and king Pradyota of Avanti Udayana entered into a matrimonial alliance with the king of Magadha The ruler of Avand invaded—Kausambi and as he was unsuccessful, he had to marry his daughter to Udayana It is not possible to deny the importance of the matrimonial alliances of Udayana According- to Dr B C Law, "Had not Udayana contracted these alliances, Kausambi would have fallen an easy prey to the overgrowing power of Magadha and Avanti " It is stated that Udayana always kept his army on a war-footing and built a large number of forts on the borders of his kingdom The number of elephants in his army was very large

Udayana was very fond of huntıng He had kept an extensıve forest for that purpose To begın wıth, Udayarıa was opposed to Buddhısm, but later on lıe became a follower of Buddha and made Buddhısm the state relıgıon

Kuru country roughly corresponded to the modern Unıon Terrıtory of Delhı and Meerut Dıstrıct The Kurus dıd not occupy the same posıtıon as they dıd ın the Vedıc perıod

The Panchala country roughly corresponded to the Rohılkhand dıvısıon Lıke the Kurus, the Panchalas also had lost theır previous promınent, posıtıon Theır ımportant cıtıes were Kampılla and Kamany Madıchha or Matsya country corresponded roughly to the former state of Jaıpur ın Rajasthan The Matsyas were to the south of the Kurus and west of the Yamuna

Surasena country was south of the Matsyas Its capıtal was at Mathura

Assaka country was ın the neıghbourhood of Avantı In the tıme of Buddha, ıts settlements were on the banks of the rıver Godavarı Its capıtal was Patlıa

The state of Avand roughly corresponded to Malwa Its capıtal was Ujjenı The ruler of Avantı ın the tıme of Buddha was Chandapajjota or Pradyota He was a contemporary of Udayana of Kausambı He attacked Udayana but was defeated and had to marry hıs daughter to hım Kıng Pradyota had matrımonıal allıances not only wıth Udayana of Kausambı but also wıth the Surasena of Mathura We are told that kıng Ajatasatru feared the contemplated attack of Pradyota upon Rajgrıha Although he was gıven the nıckname of Chanda on account of hıs ferocıty, he became a convert to Buddhısm Avantı became a very important centre

of Buddhism The state of Gandhara, roughly corresponded to modern Kashmir and Taxila Its capital was Taxila which was a famous seat of learning where scholars came from all over the world

Kamboja was the adjoining country in the extreme North-West with Dwarka as its capital

It is true that most of the members of the ruling class came from the Kshatriyas but we have references also to the non-Kshatriya kings It is stated in a Jataka story that a tyrannical king was replaced by a Brahmana king There were not only monarchies in India at that time but also republics Some of the Republican states have been mentioned above The names of some of them are to be found in the accounts of the Greek writers It is the republican states of Malloi or Malavas, Oxydrakai or Kshudrakas, the Abastanoi or Ambashthas, etc , who fought against the Greeks The republican states were known as the Ganas and their work was done in an open Assembly Hall called Santhagara The Assembly or Parliament consisted of the heads of the families belonging to the clan or tribe It cannot be definitely stated whether the head of every family was given a seat in the Assembly or not Many republics had hereditary Presidents or Rajans However, there were other republics whose heads were elected, we are told that the Assembly met very frequently and all the problems of the state were discussed thoroughly in the open sessions It is possible that Buddha organized his own Sangha on the lines of the organisation of the republics It is pointed out that there was not much of difference between the executive of a monarchical state or republican state We are told that the republican state of Vaisali had a Raja an Upraja, and a Senapati In a monarchical state, there was a Raja and his Council of Ministers including the Purohit and the Senapati These persons

constituted the executive The normal relations between the various states were those of hostility and rivalry The heads of the states entered into matrimonial alliances to strengthen their position References to such matrimonial alliances have already been made above

The rise of powerful kingdoms created the problem of governing large territories Ordinarily, the conquered parts were not annexed and were given back to the ruler concerned However, whenever a nearby territory was conquered and annexed a Military Chief was appointed to rule over it Sometimes, the princes of the royal family were appointed as governors It is well-known that Prince Ajatasatru was the governor of Anga during the lifetime of his father, Bimbisara

14

The Rise of Magadha

Magadha embraces the districts of Patna and Gaya in the southern part of Bihar It was bounded on the North and the West by the rivers Ganges and Son, on the south by the spurs of the Vindhyas and on the cast by the river Champa Its earliest capital was Girivraja or Rajagriha near Rajgir The other names for the city were Magadhapura, Brihadrathapura, Vasumati, Kushagrapura and Bimbisarapuri

According to Dr H C Raychaudhuri, "The early dynastic history of Magadha is shrouded in darkness We have occasional glimpses of war-lords and statesmen, some probably entirely mythical, others having more appearance of leader The history commences with the famous Bimbisara of the Haryanka Kula " There is a reference in the Rigveda to a territory called Kikata which was ruled by a chief named of Pramaganda Kikata is, described as a synonym of Magadha There is a prayer in the Atharvaveda that fever may go to Magadha The Yajurveda refers to the bards of Magadha

The Brihadrathas According to the Mahabharata and the Puranas, the earliest dynasty of Magadha was founded by Brihadratha, the father of Jarasandha and son of Vasu According to the Ramayana, Vasu himself was the founder of Girivraja or Vasumati We come across in the Puranas the lists of the kings of this dynasty The number of the future Brihadrathas is

gıven as 16, 22 or 32 and the total length of theır rule ıs fixed at 723 or 1,000 years The chronology of the kıngs as gıven ın the Puranas and the order of theır successıon may not be true and there ıs no corroboratıon of the same However, ıt ıs stated that the Brıhadrat has had passed away when Pulıka or Punıka put hıs son Pradyota on the throne of Avand or Ujjaın As Pradyota was a contemporary of Buddha, ıt ıs presumed that the Brıhadradıa dynasty came to an end ın the sıxth century B C

The Jaın wrıters refer to two early kıngs of, Rajgrıha named Samudra Vıjaya and Gaya The latter ıs stated to have been taught by the Jaıns and reached perfectıon However, there ıs no corroboratıon of the facts stated by the Jaın wrıters

There ıs some controversy wıth regard to the next dynasty whıch ruled Magadha Accordıng to the Puranas, the Saısunaga dynasty was founded by a kıng named Sısunaga In some texts, he ıs mentıoned as Sısunaka He was succeeded by Kakavarna, Kshemadhaman and Kshemajıt or Kshatraujas, Bımbısara, Ajatasıtru, Darsa, Udaya or Udasın, Nandıvardhan and Mahanandın Accordıng to theMatsya Purana, the Saısunagas ruled for 360 years Dr V A Smıth accepts the chronology of the Saısunagas as gıven ın the Puranas as correct although he does not accept the duratıon of theır reıgns as gıven ın the Puranas

However, the crıtıcs of thıs vıew poınt out that accordıng to Asvaghosha, who ıs an earlıer authorıty than the Puranas, Bımbısara was the descendant of the Haryanka dynasty, and not the Saısunaga dynasty Accordıng to the Mahavamsa, Sıstmaga hımself was the founder of another dynasty whıch succeeded that of Bımbısara It ıs also stated ın the Puranas that

Sisunaga "will take away the glory of the Pradyotas" who were the contemporaries of Bimbisara If the above view of the Vayu Purana is correct, Sisuniga must come after Chand Pradybta Mahasena who was a contemporary of Bimbisara It is stated in the Puranas that Vaisali and Varanasi were included in the dominion of Sisunaga These territories were acquired by Bimbisara and Ajatasatru and under the circumstances Sisunaga must be placed after them and not before them There are some contradictory statements in the Puranas themselves It is stated therein that Pradyota was anointed when the Vitihotras had passed away Sisunaga destroyed the prestige of the Pradyotas and became king' Another statement is that contemporaneously with the Sisunaga king 20 Vitihotras succeeded at the same time Kalasoka, the son and successor of Sisunaga, is stated to have ruled at Pataliputra Udaya is stated to have been the founder of that city In that case also Kalasoka must come after Udaya Under the circumstances, it is presumed by scholars like Dr Raychaudhuri, Dr Majumdar and Dr Mookerji that Bimbisara was the founder of the Haryanka dynasty and Sisunaga was the founder of another dynasty which came after that

The Haryanka Dynasty There is no definite data regarding the origin of theHaryanka dynasty Bimbisara was not the founder of the dynasty as it is stated in the Mahavamsa that he was anointed king by his father when he was 15 years of age According to Turnour and N L Dey, the name of Bimbisara's father was Bhatiya, or Bhattiya He is called Mahapadma by the Tibetans According to the Puranas, the name of Bimbisara's father was Kshemajit, Hemajit, Kshatrauja or Kshetroja Another name of Bimbisara was Srenika

Bimbisara Bimbisara was an ambitious king and he added to the prestige and strength of Magadha by his policy of matrimonial alliances and annexations One of his queens was the sister of Prasenjit, the ruler of Kosala She brought with her a village in Kashi yielding a revenue of a hundred thousand for bath and perfume money Another wife was called Chellana and she was the youngest of the seven daughters of Chetaka, the ruler of Vaisali According to a Tibetan writer, Bimbisara had another wife called Vasavi It is stated that she saved the life of her husband by giving him food when the latter was imprisoned by Ajatasatru, She may be the same woman as Chellan it Another wife was probably from the Punjab Her name was Khema, the daughter of the King of Madda on Madra The matrimonial alliances must have helped Bimbisara to extend his influence both eastwards and westwards

Bimbisara had many sons and they gave him a lot of trouble According to the Jain writers, the sons of Bimbisara were Kunika or Ajatasatru, Halla, Vehalla, Abhaya, Nandisena and Megha Kumara The first three were the sons of Chellana and the fourth was that of Amrapali, the Lichchhavi courtesan The Buddhist writers refer to Ajatasatru, Vimala, Kondanna, Vehalla and Silavat

The King of Taxila was harrassed by his enemies and he asked Bimbisara to help him Although the ambassador from Taxila was well received, no help was given to the king as Bimbisara was not prepared - to alienate other rulers It is stated that Bimbisara sent his physician Jivak to cure the king of Avand who was suffering from jaundice Bimbisara conquered and annexed the kingdom of Anga after defeating Brahmadatta The conquest of Anga is proved by the evidence of the Digha Nikaya and Mahavagga

According to Hemachandra, the Jain writer, Anga was governed as a separate province by the crown prince, who had his headquarters at Champa The conquest of Anga must have added to the material prosperity of Bimbisara It is stated that Champa was one of the six cities of the Buddhist world There are references to its gate, walls and a watch tower Its traders went as far as Suvarnabhumi The other important towns of Anga were Apana and Assapino

The territory of Bimbisara included 80,000 villages' and covered an area of 300 leagues A number of republican communities under the Rajakumaras were also included within the territory

15

Alexander's Invasion of India

The invasion of Alexander, the Great, is a landmark in the history of India The date of his invasion is rightly considered to be the sheet-anchor of Indian chronology It is true that Alexander stayed in India for about 19 months only but his invasion had some very important indirect effects Alexander was the son of Philip of Macedonia He had Aristotle as his tutor but he does not seem to have been impressed very much by his philosophy He was more interested in the exploits of great heroes like Hercules and Cyrus than in the philosophy of his tutor When his father died in 335 B C , Alexander ascended the throne At that time, he was hardly 20 He was extraordinarily ambitious and would like to become world famous by his conquests Within 2 years he collected an army of 30,000 foot soldiers and 5,000 horsemen and in 334 B C , he set out for the conquest of the Persian Empire Before starting on this expedition, he had already conquered the neighbouring states and consolidated his position

Between 334 and 330 B C , Alexander was busy in the Persian wars Darius Codomannus, King of Persia, was not as strong as his, predecessors Darius I and Cyrus were and consequently he could not check the advance of Alexander Without much difficulty, Alexander was able to conquer Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt However, the decisive battle of Persia was fought at Arbela in 331 B C Darius was defeated and murdered by one of his own satraps After that,

Alexander captured and destroyed Persepolis, the capital of Persia Seistan was also occupied by the Greek troops Alexander founded a new city called Alexandria of the Arachosians which is now known as Qandhar He also conquered and occupied Afghanistan and Bactria By 328 B C , Alexander was able to conquer all the territories of the Persian Empire and modern Afghanistan He took up the title of "the Great King of Persia "

The ambition of Alexander was not satisfied and he decided to be the master of "the land of milk and honey" (India) He divided his army into two parts One part was kept by him under his own command and the other part was sent under the command of Hephaestion and Perdikkas towards India He himself undertook the task of conquering and subduing the people of the Northern area Alexander had to fight against the tribal chief who was called Astes (Hasti) by the Greeks His capital was at Pushkalavati Astes or Hasti -stood the Greek siege of his walled town for full 20 days till he fell fighting The Asvayanas and Asvakayanas fought the invader to a man and this is clear from the fact that as many as 40,000 of them were taken prisoners As many as 230,000 oxen fell into the hands of Alexander The Asvakayanas had an army of 30,000 cavalry, 38,090 infantry, 7,000 mercenaries and 30 elephants They were all assembled in the fort of Massaga which was on the banks of the River Masakavati They were led by their Queen Cleophis (Kripa?) and were "resolved to defend their country to the last extremity" So great was the enthusiasm for the defence of the country that even women took part in the fighting Even the mercenaries preferred "a glorious death to a life with dishonour "' After a furious battle, Massaga was captured A large number of persons were massacred The free cities of

Aorños, Bazira, Ora or Dyrta were captured after long sieges After consolidating his position in the hill territories, Alexander decided to cross the river Indus A bridge was constructed at Ohind which according to Foucher was about 16 miles above Attock Alexander sacrificed to the gods on a magnificent scale and gave his army rest for 30 days At Ohind, Alexander received an embassy from Ambhi, the ruler of Taxila Ambhi made his submission to Alexander and also sent presents to him

From Ohind, Alexander proceeded towards Taxila When he was about four or five mile away from Taxila, Ambhi recognized Alexander as his overlord, the latter also treated him with great courtesy and generosity At Taxila, the ruler of the Abhisara tribe sent his representatives and recognized Alexander as his overlord

16

Chandragupta and Bindusara

According to Radha Kumud Mookerji, "The foundation of the Mauryan empire is a unique event in Indian History Its glory is enhanced by the circumstances in which it is achieved It was achieved against formidable difficulties created by the establishment of a foreign rule in the country as a consequence of Alexander victorious campaigns in the Punjab during the period of two years, 327-325 B C According to V A Smith, "The advent of the Mauryan dynasty marks the passage from darkness to light for the historian Chronology suddenly becomes definite, almost precise, a huge empire spring into existence, unifying the innumerable fragments of distracted India, the Kings, who may be described with justice as Emperors are men of renown, outstanding personalities whose qualities can be discerned, albeit dimly, through the mists of time, gigantic world wide religious movements are initiated of which the effects are still felt and the affairs of secluded India are brought into close touch with those of the outer world "

It is rightly pointed out that before the Mauryas the dates in Indian controversial However, with the coming of the Mauryas chronology becomes definite The synchronism of Chandragupta with Seleucus and his identification with Sandrocottus in Greek literature put Mauryan chronology on a sound footing Asoka, is found to be a contemporary of Antiochos possess

abundant material for writing the political, social and religious history of the Mauryas This material' comes from Indian and foreign sources The account we possess of the Mauryan period is never equalled in richness or detail till we reach the reign of Akbar The Mauryan system of administration was a modern one The old system was perfected and the departmental system was, brought into existence The invasions of India by Alexander and Seleucus, brought India into intimate contact with the Western world Men like Megasthenes and Daimachus lived at the Mauryan capital, and Asoka also sent missions for foreign countries National life began to develop in the Mauryan period A lot was done in this direction by Asoka Art also made wonderful progress Oligarchies and republics were uprooted The barriers between the Aryans and non-Aryans were broken, and there was a culmination of India's social system in the Mauryan period

Sources of Mauryan History (1) Kautilya's Arthasastra The most important source for writing the history of the Mauryas is Kautilya's Arthasastra 'The book is divided into 15 Adhikaranas or sections, and 180 Prakaranas or sub-divisions It has about 6,000 Slokas The book was discovered by Shamasastri in 1909 and ably translated by him The book is more a manual for the administrator than a theoretical work on polity discussing the philosophy and fundamental principles of administration or of political science It is mainly concerned with the political problems of the government and describes its machinery and functions, both in peace and war

Controversy about its authorship There has been a great controversy about the date of Arthasastra According to Shamasastri, Ganapatisastri, N N Law,

V A Smith, Fleet and Jayaswal, Kautilya's Arthasastra was written by the Prime Minister of Chandragupta Maurya However, according to Winternitz, Jolly, Keith, and Dr Bhandarkar, the work is of a much later age and was written in the early centuries of the Christian era It is pointed out that if the work was really written by Kautilya, the Prime Minister of Chandragupta Maurya, there ought to hive been some reference in it to the Mauryan Empire and its administrative machinery There is absolutely no reference in the Arthasastra to the Municipal Boards mentioned by Megasthenes and also the Military Boards The fact that the views of Kautilya himself are given in the third person also suggests that the real author of the work was different from him The Arthasastra does not show that its author played a very active part in politics It is incredible that Chanakya could have written a work of this king without revealing a personal touch It is possible that Kautilya compiled a book of political aphorisms which are quoted by the author along with other writers but with more approval But there is no means of proving that Kautilya in question is the Mauryan Prime Minister

According to Dr Jolly, the real author of Kautilya's Arthasatra was a theoretician and not a statesman He was probably an official in a state of medium size The book was attributed to Kautilya on account of the myths current regarding that fabulous minister who was looked upon as the master and creator of the law of polity and the author of all the floating wisdom on the subject of Niti The traditional accounts of Kautilya do not refer to him as the author of any literary composition His name is not even mentioned by Magasthenes The description of India as given in Arthasastra does not show that the author

lived in the fourth century B C Patanjali in his Mahabhashya refers to the Mauryas and the Sabha of Chandragupta but he does not mention the name of Kautilya The name of Kautilya is a mere nick-name denoting falsehood and hypocrisy which could hardly have been devised by the Minister of Candragupta himself The work is full of pedantic classifications and puerile distinctions, and could not be the work of a statesman

According to Dr Jolly, Kautilya's Arthasastra was written in the third century A D Dr Jolly points out that both Kautilya and Bhasa have a verse (Navam Shravam) in common and Kautilya takes it as a quotation Consequently, he must have borrowed it from Bhasa whose date is third century A D Kautilya and Yajnavalkya agree in their laws Kautilya has merely converted the laws of Yajnavalka into Sutras The date of Yajnavalkya is third century A D The Rajadharma given in the Mahabharat is in an embryonic condition as compared with the detailed provisions given in Kautilya's Arthasastra Kautilya's Arthasastra knows the Purana and hence its date must be near the Guptas The Vaisika, one of the sections of Kamasastra, is mentioned in Kautilya's Arthasastra, Kautilya's Arthasastra knows technical terms of Sanskrit grammar and is acquainted with Ashtadhyayi of Panini Astrology and divination are known to Kautilya's Arthasastra, and two planets are mentioned by name in that book Kautilya's, Arthasastra knows a book on metalurgy called Sulba Dhatu Sastra It also knows of technical terms on mining, architecture, finance, jewels, alchemy, etc "His work is the outcome of a long period of literary activity in the field of polity than a production of a creative genius-another reason for not fixing its age limit too high" The Greeks do not mention the name

of Kautılya Kautılya's Arthasastra named alchemy which was a later growth It also mentions Suranga which is from the Greek term Syrin The description of India as given by Megasthenes and the inscriptions of Asoka do not give us an advanced stage as given in Kautılya's Arthasastra Kautılya's Arthasastra mentions written documents and this fact is contradicted by Megasthenes, who says that the Indians did not know the art of writing Megasthenes does not mention the tax on gambling, liquors, etc , but the same are mentioned in Kautılya's Arthasastra The name of Pataliputra is not mentioned in Kautılya's Arthasastra The geographical horizon of the author shows that the book was written in the South

However, the above mentioned arguments are repudiated by the Indian scholars who hold that Kautılya's Arthasastra was written in the 4th century B C It is pointed out that Kautılya is mentioned in the Indian tradition and the writings of the various writers References are made to him in Panchatantra, Kamandak, Dandin, Medatithi, etc As the whole book of Uegasthenes has not come down to us, it is not proper to base any conclusions on mere extracts from that book It is wrong to say that Kautılya did not know of any large empire, but was acquainted with only a small kingdom, Kautılya himself says that the imperial tract (Chakravarti Kshetra) lay between the Himalayas and the Ocean 9,000 Yojanas in the straight line There were many neighbours of Chandragupta Maurya both 'in the south and in the north-west It is true that Patanjali does not mention Kautılya, but that does not prove that Kautılya did not exist before him Patanjali also does not mention the names of Asoka, Bindusara or Buddha However, that does not mean that those persons did not exist simply because Patanjali does not mention them Moreover, if

the name of "Kautilya" was given to him by his parents the same could not be changed Kautilya was also a Gotra name coming down from generations The forefathers of Kautilya who bore the name Kautila or Kautili should give the explanation to Dr Jolly and not Chanakya There is nothing to, show that the Arthasastra was written by a Pandit It is also pointed out that the verse Navam Shravam is a memorial verse used in exhorting soldiers in war This is as old as history itself The verse is based on the belief that the faithless soldiers go to hell There is nothing to show that Kautilya borrowed it from Bhasa He might have borrowed it from the current memorial verses Kautilya gives two verses and Bhasa gives only one and the question of borrowing from him does not arise

It is true that there is a lot of similarity between Kautilya's Arthasastra and Yajnavalkya, but that does not prove that Kautilya did not belong to the 4th century B C Kautilya uses the term 'Yukta' which means an official In the inscriptions of Asoka, the term 'Yuta' is mentioned The latter term was not understood before 'the publication of Kautilya's Arthasastra, as it had gone completely out of use Yajnavalkya could not understand the term as used in Kautilya's Arthasastra and he used Yogyva where Kautilya had given Yukta and he also used the term 'Ayogya' where Kautilya had used the term 'Ayukta' This can be explained only on the hypothesis that Yajnavalkya merely versified the laws of Kautilya, and in same places even did not understand them

The Dharmasastras deal with the laws of Dharma and the Arthasastra is concerned with the principles and laws of the Artha Moreover, there is nothing to prove that the Rajdharma given in the Mahabharata is in an embryonic state In the theiry part, it was more developed than that given in the Arthasastras

The Puranas are known to be the oldest Dharmasastras The Bhavishya Purana is mentioned by Apastamba The same is the view of Pargiter The terms 'Purana' is also mentioned in the Chhandogya Upanishad

The Vaisika book was written by Dattak before Vatsayayan and there is nothing to show that the Vaisikas were not written before 300 B C There is nothing in Panini's work which goes against the theory that Kaudlya belonged to the time of Chandragupta Maurya

Divination is as old as the Atharvaveda The origin of astrology is also very old Nothing can be proved from the mention of two planets The knowledge of metallurgy in India is very old There has been found cast iron in the Mauryan stratum at Pataliputra Cast glass seals were also found with Mauryan and pre-Mauryan lettering by, Dr Spooner There is a mention of seven metals in the Yajurveda The composition of the cast coins found at the earliest Mauryan level is the same as that prescribed in the Arthasastra

Syrnix was employed in sieges in India in the time of Alexander Kautilya lived and after the invasion of Alexander and consequently he could use the term

As regards the argument based on Megasthenes and Asoka's inscriptions it must not be forgotten that we do not possess the original work Of Megasthenes Moreover, Megasthenes says that there were registers kept on the roads to find outdistances He also refers to milestones The Jatakas also refer to written tablets The inscriptions of Asoka Prove that the art of writing was known to the people The non-mention of Pataliputra proves nothing Moreover, Kautilya

mentions Kasi, Nepal, Kukura, Lichchhavi, Malla, Panchala, Saurashtra, Kuru, Kamboja, Madras, etc All this shows that his horizon was predominantly northern and not southern

There is certain evidence which shows conclusively that Kautilya's Arthasastra was written in the 4th century B C The use of Yukta which is only-known to the Mauryan times and the geographical horizon in laying down the policy towards the republics can only refer to the Mauryan times During the first century B C and the 1st and 2nd centuries A D , there was no power or king in India who ruled from Videha to Afghanistan and for whom Kautilya could write the Samghavritta policy The term 'Yuga' meaning 5 years is known to the Jyotisha Vedanga and not to the literature of the early centuries The fact that in the time of Kautilya the rainy season began in Sravana also proves that Kautilya lived in the 4th century B C At present, the rainy season begins in the middle of Ashadha The season falls back about One day and a half in every century According to Cunningham, "In consequence of the difference, the beginning of Varsha, or rainy season in the time of Alexander and Asoka would have fallen just one month earlier than at present " The statement of Patanjali, that the Mauryas were fond of gold or money finds corroboration in the Arthasastra that the Maurya kings instituted places of worship for making money The Jain, Buddhist and Brahmanical literatures positively assert that Kautilya was the minister of Chandragupta Maurya The Buddhist and Jain books condemn Kautilya as a rascal who was responsible for debasing currency and making money in every possible way The Puranas describe him as a very able minister In spite of that, they art, unanimous on the point that Kautilya belonged to the time of

Chandragupta Maurya The Puranas also mention that Kautilya was a minister of Chandragupta Maurya If the evidence of the Puranas can be accepted for the other purposes, there is nothing to contradict them on this point The last but one verse in the Arthasastra in which the name of the author of the book is mentioned, must have been in the book before the time of Kamandaka as the latter has paraphrased that verse in the introduction of his own book Kamandaka definitely says that Arthasastra was written by Kautilya The Puranas seem to mention a second name of Chandragupta as Narendra There is evidence that not only the name of the author is in the book, but also the name of the king Only the empire of the early Mauryas could take note of exports and imports from Mahavisi, the raisin wine of Afghanistan, weights and measures of Sibi and Mekala and Magadha at the same time of Uttarapatha and Dakshinapatha simultaneously and provide punishment for defaming the Gandhara country Only a well informed minister could have given the information contained in the Arthasastra

It is a common practice among the Indian authors to refer to themselves by their own name in the third person singular rather than in the first person plural Consequently, references to Kautilya in the third person do not necessarily prove that Kautilya himself was not the author of Arthasastra

It is true that Kautilya's Arthasastra refers only to superintendents of the various departments - However, it is possible that boards of five may have been omitted because those were mainly non-official in character The society depicted by Kautilya permits the remarriage of widows and post-puberty marriage and divorces This was the state of affairs in the Mauryan age

Very little respect I is shown to the Buddhists in Kautilya's Arthasastra and persons are prohibited from becoming recluses without providing for their families This shows that the work was written at a time when Buddhism had not yet become so strong as to induce people to leave their families and join the Samgha

The Colophon of Kautilya's Arthasastra definitely states it was written by that Kautilya who had rescued the country from the Nandas There could be no better testimony to the authorship of the book by the Prime Minister of Chandragupta Maurya

It is pointed out that there are many points of substantial agreement between Kautilya and Megasthenes Megasthenes' distinction between astonomoi (town officers) and agronomoi (rural officials) corresponds to Kautilya's account of Durga and Rastra and the duties assigned by him to the Nagarak and Samaharta respectively The creation of Boards incharge of specific administrative duties in the city and in the army, far from being unknown to Kautilya, is in fact advocated by him with particular reference to the elephant crops, cavalry chariots and infantry on the ground that a number of officials acting together would be a check on one another and less liable to corruption by enemy intrigues We must not forget that Kautilya's Arthasastra is a general normative manual of polity laying down arrangements suitable for any independent kingdom at any time and Megasthenes gives his impression of the political machinery which he actually saw roundabout 300 B C It is also possible that Megasthenes had his own prepossession natural to a high official of a large Hellenistic state and some of his statements include an Argument criticising or correcting what had been stated by the earlier Greek writers who came to India

in the company of Alexander "If we bear in mind the differences in the equipment and outlook of the Brahmana chancellor and the Greek ambassador, and interpret their statement's making due allowance for them, we shall find that on important subjects like the ownership of the soil, slavery, social organisation, legal procedure and administrative arrangements, the apparent differences are easily explained and a much closed agreement discovered than Stein considered possible "

17

Asoka

Asoka was a great king not only in the history of India but also of the whole world We possess a lot of information about him from his inscriptions and Buddhist literature According to the Buddhist tradition Bindusara had 16 wives and 101 sons Sumana or Susima was the eldest son, Asoka the second son and Tishya the youngest son In the northern tradition, the name of Asoka's mother is mentioned as Subhadrangi, but in the southern tradition she is named Dharma When Asoka was only 18, he was appointed by his father the Viceroy of Avanti Rashtra with its capital at Ujjayini It was there that Asoka married Mahadevi and his son Mahendra and his daughter Sanghamitra were born from her

We are told that there was a rebellion in Taxila and Asoka was sent to suppress the same There was another rebellion at Taxila, which its Viceroy Susima failed to suppress It is stated that when Bindusara died, Asoka captured the throne with the help of the Ministers headed by Khallataka or Radhagupta That led to a war of succession between Asoka and Susima Yuvaraja Susima was helped by his other 98 brothers excepting Tishya The, story is that Asoka killed all his 99 brothers and waded through blood to the throne and thereby got the notorious title of Chandasoka There are many stories giving ascended the throne According to Dr Smith, "The fact that his (Asoka's),

formal consecration or coronation (Abhisheka) was delayed for some four years until 269 B C , confirms the tradition that his, succession was contested and it may be true that his rival was his elder brother named Susima " Again, "It is possible that the long delay may have been due to a disputed succession involving large bloodshed, but there is no independent evidence of such a struggle "

While it is conceded that there might have been a struggle for power, it is not admitted that Asoka was responsible for the murder of all of his brothers except Tishya Dr Smith regards the story of the slaughter of his brothers as something absurd and false He points out that even the inscriptions of Asoka prove that his brothers and sisters were alive in the 17th and 18th years of his reign and their households were the object of his anxious care It is pointed out that the Fifth Rock Edict refers only to the family establishments of his brothers is existing This does not necessarily mean that his brothers themselves were also alive But, there is also nothing to show that his brothers were dead

It is difficult to, settle the controversy regarding the first four years of the reign of Asoka However, it is certain that Asoka was -consecrated four years after his accession to the throne According to Dr Smith, those four years were "one of the dark spaces in the spectrum of Indian History, vague speculation, unchecked by the salutary limitations of verified fact, is at the best, unprofitable "

Asoka took up the title of Devanampiya Piyadasi or beloved of the gods and of amiable appearance The name Asoka is found in literature and also in the Maski Edict of Asoka and the Junagadh inscription of Rudradaman I The name Dharmasoka is found on the

Sarnath ınscrıptıon of Kumaradevı We do not know much about the early years of the reıgn of Asoka Hıs personal remınıscences show that he lıved the lıfe of hıs predecessors, consumıng flesh food freely, enȷoyıng the pleasures of the chase, and encouragıng festıve assemblıes accompanıed by dancıng and drınkıng Durıng hıs first 13 years, he carrıed on the tradıtıonal polıcy of expansıon wıthın Indıa and frıendly relatıons wıth foreıgn powers He was aggressıve at home but pacıfist abroad He exchanged embassıes wıth foreıgn countrıes He employed Yavana officıals lıke Tushaspa The Dıvyavadana tells us that Asoka conquered the Svasa country

18

Mauryan Administration

Chandragupta Maurya was not only a great conqueror but also a capable administrator The administrative set-up established by him continued under successors and no change was felt necessary except that Asoka tried to liberalise it further and elaborated the public duties of the state officials The basic principles of Mauryan administration remained the same till the weaker Maurya lost their hold over the administration

We are lucky in having original source material for giving a satisfactory picture of Mauryan administration We have the inscriptions of Asoka, Arthasastra of Kautilya, the Indika of Megasthenes and fragmentary accounts given by several Greek writers At the time of invasion of India by Alexander the Great, there number of republics in Punjab, Eastern U P and Northern Bihar There are also occasional reference to them in the Arthasastra of Kautilya It is not impossible that all these Republics were integrated into the Mauryan Empire It is also possible that several Republics continued to exist as separate political units, but as feudatories of the new power The provincial Governors of the Mauryas may have supervised them

Monarchy was the prevailing form of government in the Mauryan period Kautilya was the greatest exponent of a monarchical form of government After examining the merits and demerits of various forms of

government, his conclusion wars that monarchy was the best According to him, kingship "was the mainspring of all national, exertions for the common good It was furthermore the embodiment of the unity of the interests of the various sections of the community It was moreover the guiding authority which regulated all personal and political relations and thereby smoothened 'he life of the individuals and gave them each a chance" Kingship is the spirit and the state is its expression The welfare of the state depends Upon kingship and it automatically becomes the symbol of sovereignty, To quote Kautilya again, "Everything depends upon the king He is the central pivot as it were"

There are no references to any election of kings in contemporary records, either indigenous or foreign Usually, the eldest son succeeded to the throne

Kautilya put great emphasis on the education and training of the king in the art of government and administration According to him, the body Politic gets diseased if the king lacks discipline and is ignorant Hence, the king must be instructed in four branches of human knowledge viz , Anviksaki (philosophy), Trayi (The Three Vedas), Varta (Economics) and Dandaniti (Science of government) The king should practise self-control and conquer just, anger, greed, pride, haughtiness and vainglory The king was advised to shun four special temptations viz , hunting, gambling, drinking And women Special effort was to be made to train the king in drafting, public accounts and various military tactics and exercises He was to attend upon elderly statesmen and imbibe from them their accumulated experience

Both Kautilya and Megasthenes refer to the extremely busy daily timetable of the king which

permitted him hardly six hours rest at night Only a small part of his time was spent in bath, meal and rest Almost throughout the day, he was busy either in receiving reporters and officers and in participating in the meeting of the ministry or in surveying the military parades or in judging causes and suits The Arthasastra recommends that above all a king should be quick in action and remarkable in energy, Asoka tells us in his inscriptions that he never felt satisfied that he had done his utmost for his government He instructed the official reporters to come to him even when he was dining or resting in order to report upon the business of the state The Mauryan kings showed untiring energy in the disposal of official business and that was one of the secrets of the success of Mauryan administration

The king was the fountain source of all governmental activity The army and the treasury were under his immediate control He was guided by his Council of Ministers, but he could ignore that advice in the interest of the people He could issue edicts prescribing a definite course of conduct prohibiting the slaughter of animals and the announcement of changes in the administration However, this does not mean that Mauryan kings degenerated into selfish autocrats They followed the advice of the Arthasastra and regarded the welfare and interests of their subjects more important than their own interests Asoka declared in one of his inscriptions that all his subjects were like his children and he was most anxious to promote their spiritual and temporal well-being Mauryan kings could not become autocrats on account of the existence of checks and balances There was the Mantri Parishad and two popular Assemblies to which the king was responsible The Mauryan kings acted upon the following advice of

Kautilya "In the happiness of the subjects lies the happiness of the king, in their welfare, his welfare, he should not consider good that which pleases himself, he should consider good that which pleases his subjects "

The Mauryan kings ruled over a very vast Empire and naturally there was a lot of pomp and grandeur in their courts The audience hall was a big structure resting on tall, artistic and beautifully polished pillars It was surrounded by tanks The king had a strong bodyguard He was protected by a platoon of 24 elephants when he went out for hunting or inspection The royal procession on such occasions was majestic The king was dressed in fine muslin, embroidered with purple and gold All precautions is were taken to protect his person There were a number of secret and subterranean passages as a precaution against a sudden rising or attack

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19
Culture and Civilisation

Latest researches enable its to write not only about the social, economic and religious condition of Mauryan India but also about the language, literature and art of that period The basis of the Mauryan social organisation was Varna The four traditional Varnas became endogamous and their rigidity may have generated tensions While enumerating the duties of the Varnas, Kautilya is one with the earlier Brahmanical law- givers The Vedic way of life is extolled and the Vedic sacraments like Chaulakarma, Upanayana, Godana and the like are prescribed for the prince These tendencies represent the continuation of the traditional society

Megasthenes refers to seven castes or classes Philosophers, farmers, soldiers, herdsmen, artisans, magistrates and councillors Evidently he confused caste with occupation Kautilya refers to the traditional four castes and their duties

Brahmanas

The Brahmanas had maintained their high status in society and sought to preserve their position and privileges Their influence in the ideological and religious spheres was considerable They enjoyed high esteem as they offered sacrifices to gods and practised magical rites They acted as advisers to rulers It was usually a Brahman who acted as a Purohita, the royal priest and the king's preceptor whose role at the court

was very important His salary amounted to 48,000 Panas Even Buddhist writings describe the Brahman as chief advisers to the rulers and high dignitaries in monarchical states and name them among the officials, Amatyas and Mahamatras The Brahmanas were tutors to crown princes and retainers of the king They were respected by the representatives of other Varnas including the Vaisyas

Although Megasthenes says nothing about the property status of the Brahmanas, Indian sources contain references to land and money granted to them by the king Some of them supervised tax collection Some Brahmana families were very rich and influential In some areas, their estates were very large This was so in spite of the fact that an ideal Brahmana was expected to have no property

There are references to participation by the Brahmanas in the legal system and to the fact that they acted as Senapati, Commander-in-Chief in the army It is true that real political power was exercised by he Kshatriyas but the role of the Brahmanas in monarchies was very great

The Brahmanas were exempted from taxes but Kautilya recommends that a Brahmana guilty of encroaching on state power and raising a rebel- lion should be drowned In the case of theft, he should be branded with a mark in the shape of a dog or in the shape of a headless trunk if he killed a human being "Proclaiming a Brahmana guilty of sinful deeds and making the scar of the mark on him, the king should exile trim from the country or settle him in mines "

There is evidence to the effect that Brahmanas began to abandon their traditional occupations of reading, teaching and performing religious duties They took to agriculture, cattle-raising and trade A

Brahmana lost his status if he violated the restrictions prescribed regarding food and gifts and adopted a low profession for livelihood In actual life, specially in times of distress, a Brahmana was allowed to follow occupations not theoretically prescribed for him There was a decline in the authority and position of the Brahmanas not only due to the spread of Buddhism but also due to the development of economy and growth of towns which led to the consolidation of the position of artisans and tradesmen However, the Brahmanas retained their influence mostly in villages The decline of the role of the Brahmanas in the Mauryan period did not mean that they lost their influence or privileges completely In the position and ideological sphere, they were compelled to lower their claims but in the economic and social areas they still retained some of their position The situation was primarily characteristic of the monarchic states of Magadha and Kosala where there were many Brahmanic settlements (Brahmanagama) and private estates owned by Brahmanas and where the practice of granting them land was particularly wide- spread

Kshatriyas

The duties of the Kshatriyas comprised Adhyayana, Yajna, Dana, Sastra-Jive (Profession of arms as source of livelihood) and Bhutarakshana (protection of living beings) Political power was concentrated in their hands Their role grew in importance in the period of the formation of large states and a unified empire Buddhist writings always placed them before the Brahmanas As a rule, kings were Kshatriyas who were responsible for keeping order in the country and observing Varna laws Their political power rested on an appropriate economic basis Many of them possessed large estates The right to carry arms was mainly enjoyed by the Kshatriyas Only in special

cases, it was extended to the Brahmanas and Vaisyas It is true that Kautilya also mentions troops consisting of Brahmanas, but this evidently refers, to monarchies alone In the Republics, the army was constituted mostly 'by the Kshatriyas

The army was in the hands of the Kshatriyas, Megasthenes writes, "The fifth class, among the Indians, consists of the warriors who are second in point of numbers to the husbandmen, but lead a life of supreme freedom and enjoyment They have only military duties to perform Others make their arms, and others supply them with horses, and they have others to attend on them in the camp, who take care of their horses, clean their arms, drive their elephants, prepare their chariots, and act as their charioteers As long as they are required to fight, they fight, and when peace returns they abandon themselves to enjoyment, the pay which they receive from the state being so liberal that they can with case maintain themselves and others besides "

During this period, a differentiation emerged among the Kshatriyas Some tribes became poorer and their members became hired soldiers Many Kshatriyas were obliged to engage in trade and crafts and their status approached that of the Vaisyas On the whole, the Kshatriyas increased, in influence and real power during this period That is the reason -why' the Brahmanas, striving to consolidate their position, favoured a union with the Kshatriyas who could ensure political stability and the preservation of the existing social, structure

Vaisyas

The duties of the Vaisyas were Adhyayana, Yajna, Dana, Krishi (agriculture), Pasupala (cattle rearing) and Vanijya (trade) During the Mauryan period,

owing to the economic development of the country, the position of the. Vaisyas improved and that also improved their status which was approaching that of the Brahmanas and Kshatriyas. Through their trade guilds, they often controlled urban institutions. As they were denied the position of prestige to which they were entitled, there was resentment among them and they supported Buddhism and Jainism.

Most of the Vaisyas were engaged in agriculture and crafts. They constituted the bulk of the tax-payers. Among them there were owners of land plots, sometimes of quite large estates and also rich Sethas who carried on big trade transactions and were engaged in usuary. Some of them even sat in law courts. However, there are many references to ruined Vaisyas who had to take up low occupations. They sank to the level of the Sudras.

Kautilya refers to the enrolment of troops from Vaisyas and Sudras, but that was done in times of emergency. In all likelihood, the Vaisyas and Sudras were not full warriors but performed some auxiliary work in the army. The Vaisyas also did not occupy high government posts.

Sudras

The functions assigned to the Sudras were Varta (production of wealth), Karukarma (arts) and Kusilvakarma (crafts). They were debarred from sacraments (Samskars), and even from hearing sacred texts. They were denied the rites of marriages, cooking of daily food in the Grihya fires and funeral ceremonies (Shraddha). They had few privileges and a horde of obligations. Their position degenerated to that of a slave except that they were still free men.

The Sudras were grossly dissatisfied with the conditions of their life and indulged in criminal

activities Several categories of offenders and suspects, listed by Kautilya, related to the Sudras According to Kautilya, when a Sudra calls himself a Brahmana, steals the property of gods, or is hostile to the king, either his eyes should be destroyed by the application of a poisonous ointment, or he should pay' a fine of 800 Panas That implies that some Sudras bore hostility to the priestly and ruling classes

It was for the first time during the Mauryan period that a section of the Sudras who were hitherto agricultural labourers were provided with land in lie new colonised areas, They were also engaged as sharecroppers on clown lands Forced labour (Vishti) was imposed on them on a much larger scale than in the earlier period A class of government servants called Vishtivardhakas by Kautilya worked as procurer

Improvement in the economic position of the Sudras did not favourably affect, their low social, status In comparison with the Vedic period, their political role further declined and they remained largely the "service category" devoid of any political rights The relations between the Sudras and the representatives of the higher Varnas were strained The Brahmanas did riot conceal their contempt for the Sudras who were considered low, cruel and deceitful and who nourished enmity for them

According to G M Bongard-Levin, the Varna and caste structure revealed tie following peculiarities (hiring the Mauryan period the emergence of the property principle in assessing a man's system in society, the growing rote of the Kshatriyas, the preservation by the Brahmanas of important positions despite a certain decline in their ideological influence, the rise of the Vaisyas' economic status accompanied

by a loss of their political rights and the growth of differentiation as a result of which some of their groups came nearer to the Sudras, whose economic position had also improved to a certain extent

Mixed castes

In addition to the four castes, Kautilya refers to no less than 15 mixed castes by the general name Antyavasayin (literally, living at the end) That was the result of marriages between persons of different castes The members of such mixed castes as the Chandala and Svapaka were untouchables They were required to live outside the main settlement, near the cremation ground

Joint family system was a feature of the Mauryan society Emphasis was put on conjugal fidelity Megasthenes writes, "Tire wives prostitute themselves unless they are compelled to be chaste " Again, "A woman who kills the king when drunk, becomes the wife of his successor " Marriage between the members of the same caste was preferred though inter-marriage between different castes was prevalent The rules about remarriage in the Arthasastra follow the rules laid down in the Dharmasastras Kautilya is more liberal to women in matters of marriage, contract and divorce A woman can remarry if her husband was abroad for a long time, if he suffered from incurable ailments or was sterile, if he had become an outcaste, it he was of bad character or was guilty of high treason or was dangerous to her life A husband could divorce his wife on account of her infidelity or if she fails to give birth to a son Divorce on- the ground of ill feeling was also possible by mutual consent, but not at the will of one party alone Kautilya places husband and wife on an equal footing

Women

Women were educated They participated in social and religious functions They were employed as spies and bodyguards However, those privileges were restricted only to the upper of society In general there were many restrictions on the liberty of women There were restrictions on their free movements The system of Sati was practised at a few places in the North-West, but it was not a general practice in any part of India Monogamy was the rule but men belonging to the rich and ruling classes had started keeping many wives The physical chastity of women was gaining importance and widow remarriage and divorce were discourage Amongst the Hindus, the murder of a woman was regarded as equal to the murder of a Brahman In general, the condition of women was not god As compared to Hinduism and Jainism, Buddhism offered a better status to women and consequently a large number of women became nuns

Ganikas or courtesans enjoyed a good social standing There was a Superintendent to look after prostitutes They were employed by the state as spies They carried a licence by paying two days earning every month to the state We learn from the Arthasastra that a prostitute noted for her beauty, youth and accomplishment was appointed superintendent oil a salary of 11000 Panas

Dress

Both men and women put oil good dollies While the common people used cotton garments, the rich wore garments or silk and linin, decorated with embroidery, precious stones and even jewels Woollen clothes were also used in winter Both men and women used all sorts of ornaments and cosmetics to beautify themselves

Diet

Rice, pulses, fruits, vegetables, milk and its products were the items of common diet of the people On the occasion of festivals and social gatherings, they ate meat and drank intoxican's including liquor

The sources of entertainment of the people included bouts between men and animals, chariot laces, chess, gambling, drama, music and dance Social and religious festivals also provided occasions for merriment to the people

Public and private morality was high The people did not engage themselves in telling lies or theft There was hardly any necessity to protect property and home Disputes regarding property were rare

Slavery

Whether or not slavery existed in Mauryan India has been a matter of controversy Megasthenes tells us that there were no slaves in India, but the Arthasastra of Kautilva contains detailed laws about slavery and manumission Slaves were mostly Sudras and they supplied the bulk of labour power In special circumstances, the members of higher Varnas could also be mortgaged Kautilya refers to them as Ahitakas He has laid down rules to regulate the treatment of slaves They were not outcastes and were employed in the households Forcible production from slaves was non-existent They could buy their freedom and become honourable members of society A slave girl bearing a son to her master automatically became free In his edicts, Asoka exhorted the people to be humane and considerate to their slaves

Kautilya took keen interest to regulate the institution of slavery He forbade the sale of children into slavery except in the emergency Slaves were permitted to own and inherit property and earn money

freely in their spare time They could not be forced to do any defiling work The masters of slaves were advised to protect the chastity of slave girls The state was advised to interfere in cases where slaves were treated badly by their masters According to Kautilya, persons belonging to higher castes could be mortgaged in special circumstances The lenient way in which slaves were treated during the Mauryan period led Megasthenes to arrive at the conclusion that the system of slavery was absent during the Mauryan period

There were two types of slaves life-ling slaves and slaves for a specified period Life-long slaves were either slaves born in the house or prisoners of war Life-long slaves could never abandon their status of bondage, which was extended to their children also There were slaves born in the house, purchased slaves and slaves brought from a foreign country The view of Dr G M Bongard-Levin is that the approach to slavery in the Arthasastra is a practical one It is determined by the need to protect the interests of the state's authority and free Aryas, including those temporarily enslaved A special chapter in the Arthasastra is concerned with slaves and Karmakars It contains a list of categories of slaves Kautilya draws a sharp borderline between Aryas and Mlechhas and lists the kinds of punishment for reducing free members of the four Varnas to slavery For one selling or keeping as a pledge a minor Arya individual except a life-long slave, the fine is 12 Panas for a kinsman in the case of a Sudra, doubt that amount in the case of a Vaisya, three times in the case of a Kshatriya and four times in the case of a Brahmana For a stranger, the lowest, the middle and the highest fines and death are the punishments respectively, also for purchasers and witnesses There was to be no slavery for an Arya in

any circumstances whatsoever A set of rules were intended to protect a free man who had been reduced to temporary slavery under certain circumstances He was to be made free on the payment of the price From an owner who did not re- lease a slave when offered an appropriate ransom, a fine of 12 Panas was to be levied It was prohibited to re-engage a slave after he had been ransomed Violation of this rule was fined by 12 Panas This shows that the power of the master over his pledged slaves was to some extent limited The offspring of a temporary slave was considered free and could even receive the inheritance left by his father The offspring begotten by the master on his own 4 male slave was to be free alongwith his mother

According to Kautilya, if an Arya was made a prisoner of war, he was to be freed after suitable work for a specified period or for half the price

Slaves were employed in agriculture for clearing goods, tilling fields, sowing, harvesting, tending cattle etc and handicrafts They worked on royal estates as well as private farms Slave labour was also employed on monastery lands Small farms had no particular need for slave labour The wide use of slave labour for house-keeping was a typical feature of ancient Indian slave ownership They had to do things like grinding grain, sorting out cotton and husking rice, spinning, weaving and repairs and building work Sometimes slaves were sent out to work for money but they had to bring their earnings to their master

The view of Dr G M Bongard-Levin is that during the Mauryan period, slavery was already widespread and had a major role to play, especially in the developed regions of the Mauryan Empire Slavery as a pattern exerted a tangible influence on the social structure

Economic condition

In the words of Dr G M Bongard-Levin, the Mauryan age is marked by the spread of iron, the development of agriculture, crafts and trade, the growth of towns etc The foundation of the Mauryan Empire, which united the diverse areas of the vast sub-continent into one state, was extremely important for the development of the country's economy which was also promoted by the extending commercial and cultural contacts with neighbouring countries Interest in economic problems grew quite perceptibly in this period Kautilya names the science of economy among, the four basic sciences, comprising the teaching of agriculture, cattle-raising and trade The use of iron enabled new areas to be developed, in particular, the densely wooded tracts of land along the Ganges

Agriculture

Basically, the Mauryan economy was agrarian and the majority of the people were agriculturists It was during the Mauryan period that the transition to agriculture was completed in India and agriculture became the basic economic activity of the people Agricultural settlements arose along the rivers and in the river valleys The fertile soil and artificial irrigation enabled the Indians to collect two and sometimes more harvests a year Strabo writes, 'Megasthenes indicates the fertility of India by the fact of the soil producing two crops every year both of fruits and grain " The land of Magadha was specially marked as very fertile and suitable for agriculture

The principal crops were various kinds of rice, barley, millet and wheat In those areas where no rice could be grown, the chief crop was millet There are also references to sugarcane, fruits and vegetables

As regards the farming technology of that period,

the chief farming implement was the plough which was usually drawn by oxen To make ploughing deeper, several, oxen were harnessed, sometimes as many as 24 The plough symbolised prosperity Sickles, hoes and spades were also used in farming These tools have been excavated at in any places

Agriculture suffered to some extent due to the effects of Jainism and Buddhism That prompted Kautilya to foster the rusticity of villagers to augment agricultural output so that the state could expropriate the maximum possible surplus from the people The exploiting character of the, Mauryan state becomes evident from the following statement of Kautilya "As for settling a land with the four castes, the one where the lowest castes predominate is better because it will permit all sorts exploitation " Numerous state farms were placed under the supervision of the Superintendent of Agriculture (Sitadhyksha) who got them cultivated with the help of numerous slaves and hired labourers The state encouraged the extension of cultivable area by bringing more land under the plough It remitted taxes and supplied cattle, seed and money to those agriculturists who brought virgin soil under the plough The retired officials of the village and priests were granted new settlements The state did not allow the cultivable land to lie fallow and if the peasants failed to cultivate their lands, strangers were permitted to cultivate and appropriate the produce That led to an unprecedented growth of settled agriculture, specially in the Gangetic valley Measures were adopted by the state to protect fields and forests from fire

The importance of irrigation to agriculture in India was fully recognised In some parts of the country, there can be no produce without irrigation In certain areas, water for irrigation was measured and

distributed The Arthasastra refers to a water tax which was regularly collected wherever the state assisted in providing irrigation The construction and maintenance of reservoirs, tanks, canals and wells were regarded as a part of the functions of the government

Rudradaman's inscription records that Pushyagupta, a Governor of Chandrargupta, built a water reservoir which was furnished with channels Irrigation works of that period are also known from excavations Patanjali refers to irrigation works The Hathigumpha inscription of Kharavela reports the building of a canal by King Nanda of the Nanda dynasty We know about the system of artificial irrigation in the Mauryan period from ancient writing, epigraphy and narrative sources Megasthenes writes that when he stayed in India there was a special group of state officials who inspected the sluices by which water was let out from the main canal into their branches so that every one could have on equal supply of it

The Arthasastra contains substantial data on irrigation systems, Kautilya fully realised that irrigation was "the basis of crop growing" and urged the ruler to pay more attention to building and maintaining appropriate systems The Arhasastra reflects a high level of irrigation technology

The concern for the promotion of livestock—breeding was largely a consequence of the needs of agriculture Animals were used for many kinds of field work They provided a means of transport for transporting troops and as a source of raw material for various crafts, The people glorified in the possession of cattle Asoka's edicts show that the state paid a lot of attention to promoting livestock-breeding In addition

to major officials like the Dharmamahamatras, they mention special officials supervising pastures -called Vrajabhumikas Kautilya devotes full one chapter to a cattle supervisor (Go-Adhyksha) and gives interesting data on the strict system of checking cattle and all produce on the royal cattle-breeding farms Any person -killing or stealing cattle or even instigating such killing was liable to capital punishment

Economic needs and military requirements promoted horse-breeding and elephant- breeding A private person was not allowed to keep a stallion or an elephant as they were regarded as crown property and their care was entrusted to special supervisors

Growth of cities

The use of iron facilitated the cleaning of jungles and furrowed the land more deeply so as to exploit fully the potential fertility of the Ganga, Yamuna valley the spurt in agriculture resulted in the accumulation of surplus food necessitating its exports which was facilitated by the natural waterway of the Ganges The resulting trade and commerce led to the rise of gradual urbanisation The famous cities of Sravasti, Varanasi, Champa, Rajagriha, Ujjain, Kosambi, Kusinagara, Saket etc grew around market places and attracted artisans from far and near with the allurement of easy availability of raw material and ready market for the disposal of their products With the consolidation of the market, cities multiplied in number and became the storehouse of wealth These cities Kubernagri were so much coveted and prized by the adventuring spirits that they became the capitals of the new states

Archaeological, data show that many townships were built according to a certain plan The Arthasastra gives a detailed description of the building of city edifices The art of urban planning was well known

even to the Harappa people However, all townships were not built according to a preconceived plan For example, the streets of Taxila were crooked, narrow and not systematic

The growth of towns led to the formation of an attitude towards urban life and towards townsmen While the earlier writers referred to town derisively and with disapproval, the Arthasastra and the Puranas describe the city as the backbone of a state

Industry

The enormous advance of Indian industries was rendered possible by the abundance of India's agricultural and mineral sources Another important factor was the extraordinary skill of Indian craftsmen One of the oldest Indian industries is that of textile industry and cotton manufacture has the first place It had an excellent market at home in the habits of the people whose immemorial dress consisted of a pair of cotton garments Gotton industry became famous for the excellence of Indian fabrics Kautilya writes that Madhura, Aparanta, Kasi, Vanga, Vatsa and Mahisa produced the best cotton fabrics Kautilya mentions three varieties of Dukula which were the products of Vanga, undra and Suvarnakudya In the same connection, Kautilya mentions linin fabrics of Kasi and Pundra He also refers to the fabrics produced in Magadha, Pundra and Suvarnakudya It is dear that Bengal, Kamarupa and Banaras were the chief regions famous as centres of textile industry

As regards costlier textiles, there are references to silk cloth Kautilya mentions Kauseya alongwith Chinese fabric of Chinese manufacture That shows that silks of Chinese origin competed with those made in India The manufacture of wool was an old and indigenous industry Kautilya refers to three varieties

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swords, axes, spears etc It also refers to two classes of war machines, movable and immovable This is confirmed by the Greek accounts Arrian says that the Indian foot-soldiers were armed with bows and javelins and broad-bladed swords Horsemen carried two. lances

Trade

The Indians bad developed an extensive inland trade which was borne along well- known trade-routes Those routes were marked by' convenient stages and served to link up the most distant parts of the country with one-another One trade-route was from East to West It ran principally along the great rivers From Champa, boats plied to Banaras From Banaras, they led tip the Ganges as far as Sahajati and up the Jamuna as far as Kausambi Further West the route-led by land tracts to Sindhu The second trade route was from North to South-East This route extended from Sravasti the capital of Kesala, to Pratishthana on the Godavari and the stations lying oil, it in the reverse direction included Ujjayini, Vidisa and Kausambi The third route was from North to South-East This route ran from Sravasti to Rajagriha and had a number of stations including Kapilavastu, Vaisali, Pataliputra and Nalanda The fourth route stretched along the land of the Five Rivers (Punjab) to the great highways of Central and Western Asia There -ire references to merchants travelling front Kashmir and Gandhara to Videhar, from Banaras to Ujjayini, from Magadha to Sauvira etc A lot of wealth came from inland trade The trading connections of Anathapindika of Sravasti extended to Rajagriha on the one side and Kasi on the other

However, trading was not easy, Roads were invested by robbers against whom the merchants

protected themselves, by hırıng the servıces of forestguards Deserts were crossed at nıght wıth the help of land-pılots guıdıng the caravan by the stars Some of the roads were called royal or great roads (Rajapatha or Mahamagga) However, rıvers were not brıdged and had to be crossed by ferrıes Both overland and oversea trade attracted the attentıon of Indıan merchants There are references to merchants voyagıng from Champa or Banaras to Suvarnabhumı There are references to merchants voyagıng from Bharukachcha on the Western coast to the same destınatıon There are references to merchants travellıng from Banaras to Baveru

The rıse of the Nandas and the Mauryas helped greatly to ımprove Indıa's ınland and foreıgn trade The lıberatıon of the Indus valley and the defeat of Seleucus gave Chandragupta Maurya complete control over the North-Western route Wıth the conquest of the Deccan by Chandragupta, Maurya/Bındusara, the possessıon of dıe Western and Southern routes was ensured to the Mauryas The conquest of Kalınga by Asoka destroyed the only possıble rıval for the mastery of the Eastern trade Whıle the Maurays brought all the groat ınland trade routes under theır control, theır rule was helpful for the growth of trade ın other ways The Mauryas had a specıal department for the constructıon of roads Among other dutıes, the officers of the department had to construct roads and ıt every ten stadıa set tıp a pıllar to show the bye-roads and dıstances The most famous road of that tıme was the Royal Road connectıng the North-West frontıer wıth Patalıputra and leadıng thence to the mouth of the Ganges The stages of that road together wıth theır dıstances have been gıven by the Roman wrıter Plıny ın hıs work called Natural Hıstory

External trade was carried on with Syria, Egypt, Greece etc in the West After the conquest of Kalinga with its sea port on the Eastern coast of India, it was carried on with the countries of South-East Asia and China The state controlled foreign trade and licences were given for that purpose The chief articles of export were -spices, pearls and diamonds, sandal wood, ivory, cotton cloth, silk yarn, muslin etc The principal imports were linen, silver, gold, dry fruits, etc

The- Mauryan state exercised a rigid control, over all trade and industry which yielded profit The Superintendent of, Commerce (Panyadhyaksha) fixed the prices of commodities and intervened wherever there was a glut of air), commodity The Superintendent of 'Weights and Measures (Patavadhyaksha) enforced the standard weight, and measures The Superintendent of the Market safeguarded against the fraudulent practices of the trading class The Superintendent of Ships regulated river traffic and collected ferry charges The Superintendent of Tolls (Sulkadhyaksha) collected customs duty ranging from 1/5 to 1/25 from the traders The state regulated industries through its Superintendents The state was the biggest I owner ci industries Both the state servants and private traders dealt with the goods produced by the state

An important aspect of Mauryan economy was the state monopoly of mining and metallurgy It was a source of great income Kautilya writes, "Treasury had its origin in mining and force is the' treasury, and it is by means of the treasury and force that the earth is acquired " The Superintendent of Mining was Akaradhyaksha whose duty was to prospect for new mines and reopen old and disused ones The state enjoyed unrestricted monopoly in the trade of salt and a Superintendent looked after the salt mines That

silver mines were worked becomes dear from the large number of silver punch-marked coins assignable to the Mauryan period There was -1 - Superintendent of Iron and he looked after the manufacture of things from iron

The state controlled prices and protected the public, customers and consumers against unauthorised prices and fraudulent transactions Severe punishment was given to those who were guilty Of smuggling and adulteration of goods Strikes by workmen for an increase in their wages were declared illegal

Guilds

Guilds played an important role in the development of economy in, the time of the Mauryas There were guilds of craftsmen and traders The President of the Sreni (Guild) was variously called Srenimukhya, Jeshta or Pramukha, whose office was hereditary He possessed executive and judicial authority over the merchants who were the members of the Guild The customs of the Guild were recognised as authoritative in judicial trials Their regulations had the force of law and were upheld by the king The guilds of artisans living in the capital were made to pay taxes while those in the country side were presumably granted exemption Kautilya realised the wealth and importance of the guilds and reserved separate quarters in an ideal planning of a town He further recommends that in times of emergency, the state could rob the wealth of the guilds

The establishment of guilds was promoted both by the localisation of crafts and the hereditary nature of trades which were handed down from generation to generation The independence of the Sreni was sometimes So great that the king and the guilds were dependent on each other

Currency

The use of currency became fairly common during the Mauryan period on account of the development of commerce Money was used not only for trade but also by the government for paying its officers in cash Kautilya prescribed the salaries to be paid to the state servants They were to range from 48000 Panas to 60 Panas The state functioned on the basis of a powerful cash economy The largest number of Punch marked (mostly silver) coins are assignable to the Mauryan period and come from Eastern U P and Bihar

There were coins of different metals for the purpose of exchange The most popular among them were Nikkha, a gold coin, Purana, a silver coin and Karshapana, a copper coin

An important feature of the economic Organisation of the Mauryas was heavy taxation by the state It is true that the big Mauryan Empire increased the prosperity of the state, but it also led to huge civil and military expenditure That necessitated heavy taxation of the people by the state Dr R S Sharma writes "The distinguishing feature of Maurya economy is the state control of agriculture, industry and trade and the levy of all varieties of taxes on the people " The peasants were required to pay land revenue, irrigation tax called Haranya, taxes on their cattle and also a tax to meet the expenditure of the army passing through their territories There was one religious tax called Bali A tax called Kara was collected on the sale of flowers and fruits Trade tax ranged from 1/5 to 1/25 of the price of various articles

Another economic policy of the Maurya rulers caused additional hardship to the people The Maurya kings kept ill reserve half of the income of the state for

contingency and emergency purposes and for that reason many taxes in kind That policy led to additional burden on the people and also obstructed the free flow of goods in the market and capital formation by the people All that must have adversely affected the economic life of the common people

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Satavahans or Andhras

The sources of our information for the Satavahanas or Andhras who succeeded the Kanvas are scanty The number of inscriptions is very small and they do not possess many details We have only 7 inscriptions from Eastern Deccan and 19 from Western Deccan A large number of coins have been found in Western Deccan, Madhya Pradesh and Eastern Deccan Scholars like Thomas, Rapson, Cunningham, Bhagwanlal Indraji, Scott, etc , have extracted all the information about the Andhras, but there are many discrepancies in them and consequently it is difficult to accept their testimony According to some Puranas, there were 14 kings of the Andhra dynasty who ruled for 300 years, but according to some others, there were 30 kings who ruled for more than 400 years The duration of the dynasty is 460 years according to the Matsya Purana, 456 years according to the Brahmanda Purana, 411 years according to the Vayu Purana and 300 years according to the Vishnu Purana This obviously points out to the confusion created in the Puranas Brihatkatha of Gunadhya is stated to have been written at the court of a Satavahana king It is not available as a whole and we have only some fragments Lilavati which purports to refer to the military exploits of king Hala, has not much trustworthy material All this creates a lot of difficulty for students of the Satavahana period of Indian history

Original Home of the Satavahanas There is a lot of controversy regarding the original home of the Satavahanas Kings called Satavahanas and Satakarnis in inscriptions and coins are given the name of Andhras, Andhra-bhrityah and Andhrajatiyah in the Puranas From this, scholars have come to the conclusion that the Satavahanas or the Satakarnis were identical with the Andhras The view of Rapson, Smith and Bhandarkar was that the Satavahanas belonged to Andhradesa Dr Smith fixed the capital of the Andhras at Srikakulam but Bhandarkar preferred to fix it at Dhannakataka According to Dr Gopalchari, epigraphic, numismatic and literary evidence points to a Western origin, the region around Pratishthana, which is modern Paithan in the Aurangabad district of former Hyderabad State It is suggested that the original home of the Satavahanas was in Maharashtra Probably Satakarni conquered Andhradesa and colonised the same after the subjugation of the natives The Satavahanas later on lost their northern and western possessions and got so much mixed up with the people of Andhradesa whom they ruled that the Puranas called them not only the rulers of Andhradesa but also gave them the title of the Andhra kings

The Satavahanas were Brahmanas like the Sungas and Kanvas This is confirmed by the Nasik cave inscription of Vasishthiputra Pulumayi where king Gautamiputra Satakarni is described as a unique Brahman, equal in powers to Ram and destroyer of the pride and prestige of the Kshatriyas

21

The Bactrian Greeks in India

Bactria and Parthia were the two districts of the Empire of Seleucus Sometime about 250 B C , both Bactria and Parthia revolted against Antiochus II, the grandson of Seleucus Neither Antiochus II nor any of his immediate successors was strong enough to put down the revolts and consequently both Bactria and Parthia became independent The leader of the revolt of the Bactrians was Diodotos I and that of the Parthians was Arsakes

Bactria was the district round Balkh in Northern Afghanistan beyond the Hindu Kush The fertile plain of Bactria was called by Strabo "the pride of Arriana" Bactria was inhabited from a very early period by an aboriginal race who were most likely of the Scythian stock Even before Bactria was conquered by Iran, its contact with the country was intimate A large number of Iranians had settled in Bactria After its conquest by Iran, Bactria was put under a Satrap on account of its strategic importance Alexander did not make any change in the method of administration of Bactria after his defeat of Persia However, in order to strengthen his hold over Bactria, Alexander prevailed upon a large number of his followers to settle in Bactria and they formed a powerful bloc of the Bactrian people The mixed population of Bactria lived under a Greek Satrap

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Sakas and the Pahlavas

The Saka, Pahlava and Yavana invaders of India are mentioned together in Sanskrit literature under the group name of Saka-Yavana-Pahlava as foreigners and barbarians One of the oldest references to the Sakas or the Scythians is to be found in the inscriptions of Darius I Three different branches of the Sakas are mentioned there The Saka and Maka are included in the Persepolis inscriptions as the countries that were conquered by Darius The Nakshi Rustam inscriptions refer to the three branches of the Sakas as his vassals Herodotus also refers to the Sakas in these words "The Sacae or Scyths, clad in trousers, had on their heads tall stiff caps rising to a point They bore the bow of their country and the dagger, besides which they carried the battle-axe, or sagaris They were in truth Amyrgian Scythians, but the Persians called them Sacae, since that is the name which they give to all Scythians " It appears that two branches of the Sakas lived in contiguous regions, if not in the same province, which appears to have been the Drangiana-Seistan territory Their third branch has been identified by Prof Rapson with the Sakas of Europe who dwelt in the Russian steppes on the north of the Black Sea The Sakas on the borders of Iran were the descendants of those whose migrations from Central Asia probably began as early as the 8th century B C

For the early history of the Sakas, we are indebted to the Chinese and classical writers The

Chinese Encyclopaedia of Matwan-lin of the 13th century gives the following information "In ancient times the Hiung-nu having defeated the Yueh-chi, the latter went to the west to dwell among the Ta-hia, and the king of the Sai went southwards to live in Ki-pin The tribes of the Sai divided and dispersed, so as to form here and there different kingdoms " According to History of the First Han Dynasty, "Formerly when the Hiung-nu conquered the Ta Yuch-chi, the latter emigrated to the west and subjugated the Ta-hia whereupon the Sai-wang went to the South and ruled over Ki-pin "

The Sakas were nomadic tribes who originally belonged to Central Asia In about 165 B C , they were turned out of their original home by the Yueh-chi The Sakas migrated to the South-West and fought again the Greek kingdom of Bactria Most of the Sakas settled down in he valley of the river Hilmand and established small states there One of those settlements is still known as Sakistan or Seistan With the passage of time, more Sakas came from Central Asia and consequently those who had settled in the North-West crossed the Hindu Kush and Sulaiman ranges to settle in Northern India They came into conflict with the Parthians Some of the Saka chiefs Joined service under the Parthians and were even, appointed Governors or Satraps of the various provinces of the Parthian kingdom

The association of the Sakas with India must have begun long before the establishment of, their rule in Ki -pin We learn from Patanjali's Mahabhashya that the Sakas at the time of the commentator were living with- the Yavanas outside the limits of Aryavarta It is possible that the Sakas might have penetrated into the extreme north-western and western borders of India some considerable time before the beginning of the

Christian era The Sakas were on the eastern borders of the Persian and Parthian empires The Ramayana places the settlements of the Sakas along with the Kambojas and the Yavanas in the extreme north beyond the Surasenas, Prasthalas, Bharatas, Kurus and Madrakas However, the Mahabharata locates them along with the Pahlavas, Barbaras, Kiratas and Yavanas The Harivamsa tell us that the Sakas used to shave half their heads

Dr J N Banerjea is of the view that most of the Saka invaders who came to India did so by an indirect route They did not come through the-Khyber Pass After crossing the Hindu-Kush, they entered the Northern borders of Gedrosia and then entered into the Indus Valley through the Bolan Pass Many Saka kings were contemporaries of the Indo-Greek rulers Types of coins that were being issued by the Indo Greeks in Arachosia and the Punjab were also being copied by the Sakas The evidence of the coins shows that the main branch of the Sakas could not have utilised the principal highway in their immigration into India Their direct entry was checked by the Greek principality under Hermaeus and his immediate predecessors in the Kabul Valley

The nomenclature of the early Sakas in India shows a mixture of Saka, Parthian and Iranian elements This shows that before their entry into India, the Sakas had lived for a long time in Iranian Sakistan under Parthian rulers There must have occurred a good deal of mixture of blood In India, the Sakas adapted themselves to their new environments and began to adopt Indian names and religious beliefs They entered into matrimonial relations with the Indians In the time of Patanjali's Mahabhashya, the Sakas were described as Aniravasita Sudras There is a reference in the Manusamhita that the Sakas were

degraded Kshatriyas On the basis of the information got from coins, two or more lines of Saka kings ruling over the northern, north-western and western parts of India have been recognised by scholars Some of the Saka chiefs are known from Kharoshthi and Brahmi inscriptions The two main royal lines of the Sakas known from the coins are those of Manes in the Punjab and its adjoining lands and of Vonones and his associates in Arachosia or Kandhar and Gedrosia and Drangiana or Baluchistan regions Manes and probably Azes are mentioned in a few Kharoshthi inscriptions However, neither Vonones nor any of his direct associates is mentioned in any Brahmi or Kharoshthi inscription It is possible that Maues and Vonones were roughly contemporary rulers The view of Dr V A Smith was that Maues and Vonones were Parthians by race Dr J N Banerjea concedes that there are some Parthian elements associated with those rulers The names Vonones I and Vonones II are Parthian names The title of "King of Kings" prefixed to the names of the kings belonging to the Vonones and Manes groups is also Parthian The title seems to have been introduced either by Mithridates I or Mithriclates II The view of Dr Smith was that the conquests of Mithridates I extended as far as the river Hydaspas A Parthian chief named Maues took advantage of the temporary eclipse of the foreign power and made himself king in the Punjab sector Likewise, the Parthian chief Vonones established himself in the Drangiana sector of the Parthian empire After doing so, they began to extend their territories Vonones ruled over parts of Seistan, southern Afghanistan and northern Baluchistan Later on, both the lines of Maues and Vonones were merged and thereby formed an Indo-Parthian block in the extreme north and west of India Smith referred to the

coins of Manes which had Parthian devices such as a horse and a "bow in case"

According to Dr J N Banerjea, the view of Dr V A Smith cannot be upheld Dr Banerjea points out that the statement of Orosius that Mithridates I "conquered all the peoples between the rivers 'Hydaspes and the Indus" would not justify us in identifying the Hydaspes of the passage with the Indian Hydaspes or Jhelum That statement only shows that the Indus was the eastern limit of the Parthian expansions under Mithridates I The view of Rapson was that the river in question was identical with the Medus Hydaspes of Virgil To quote Rapson, - The theory of a conquest of North-western India by Mithridates I would seem to be founded on a misunderstanding of the historian's statement Rapson attributed the Parthian features of Maues and Vonones to the long contact of the Sakas with the Parthians in eastern Iran Dr Banerjea points out that the names of Maues and Vonones appear to contain definite Saka element Arrian refers to an Asiatic Saka ruler as Mauakes, The names of Azes, Azilises, Spalirises, etc , contained Saka or Iranian elements Sten Konow accepts the Saka origin of Maues but regards Vonones as identical with Vonones I of the royal Parthian dynasty, ruling in the Drangiana and Arachosia regions with imperial title before 10 B C Dr J N Banerjea points out that the view of Sten Konow cannot be accepted as it rests on data which are very largely hypothetical While ruling over the middle and lower Indus valley, Drangiana and Arachosia, both the Sakas and the Pahlavas were closely associated, and no wonder it is not always possible to distinguish between them The same family included both Pahlava and Saka names According to Rapson, "It is little more than a convenient

nomenclature which labels the princes of the family of Manes who invaded the lower Indus Valley as Sakas, and those of the family of Vonones who ruled over Drangiana and Arachosia as Pahlavas " A similar view was held by F W Thomas According to Dr J N Banerjea, "The close association of the Sakas and Pahlavas in this period is demonstrable from various sources and it is highly probable that the tribes from Eastern Iran invading India contained diverse elements There is no clear mention of any regular Parthian invasion of India, on the other hand, there were inroads byadventures of various and his associates "

23

Northern India After Harsha

It is well known that the political unity of Northern India achieved under Harsha was broken after his death Arjuna usurped the throne of Kanauj and he opposed the Chinese mission under Wang-hiuen-tse which arrived after the death of Harsha The members of the escort accompanying Wang-hiuen-tse were either massacred or taken prisoners The property of the mission, including the articles presented by Indian kings was plundered However, Wang-hiuen-tse and his colleagues managed to escape to Nepal by night Srong-tsan Gampo was at that time the ruler of Tibet He was married to a Chinese princess He gave 1,200 picked soldiers to Wang-hiuen-tse who was also to get 7,000 horse-men from Nepal King Bhaskaravarman of Kamrupa also helped Wang-hiuen-tse Wang hiuen-tse was able to storm the chief city of Tirhut 3,000 of the garrison were beheaded and 10,000 persons were drowned in the river Arjuna was defeated and taken prisoner Wang-hiuen-tse beheaded a thousand prisoners and captured the entire royal family He took 12,000 prisoners and obtained more than 13,000 heads of horses and cattle 580 walled towns made their submission during the course of the campaign Wang-hiuen-tse carried Arjuna as a captive to China We do not know the detailed history of Kanauj after the defeat of Arjuna It appears that Kanauj passed under the domination of the Maukharis who were its rulers up to the murder of Grahavarman Sucandravarman

was the son of Avantivaram and a brother or step-brother of Grahavarman He is shown as having occupied a kingly position Amsuvarman, the King of Nepal, married his sister to a Maukhari chief whose son was Bhogavarman The power and prestige of Bhogavarman was of great that King Adityasena of the later Gupta dynasty of Magadha married his daughter to him Bhoga-varman's daughter Vatsadevi was married to Sivadeva II, King of Nepal Bhogavarman is described as "the crest-jewel of the illustrious Varmans of the valourous Maukhari race" It is suggested that Sucandravarman, Bhogavarman and Manoratha-varman ruled after the dethronement of Arjuna probably over Kanauj and the neighbouring regions It is very likely that King Yasovarman of Kanauj was connected with these rulers It is suggested that the above mentioned three Varman rulers reigned for a period of about 40 years from 648 A D to 688 A D

The details of the achievements of Yasovarman are given in Gaudavaho, a Prakrit work of Vakpatiraja who was the court-poet of Yasovarman According to Gaudavaho, Yasovarman passed through the valley of the Son, reached the Vindhya mountain, defeated and killed the King of Magada, conquered the King of Vanga and reached the eastern sea-shore, He also marched into South India, defeated the King of the Deccan, crossed the Malaya mountain and reached the Southern Sea He fought against the Parasikas, received tribute from the regions of Western Ghats, came to the banks of the Narmada, entered into Marudesa or Rajasthan and from there advanced towards Srikantha or Thananesar, passed through Kuruksetra, proceeded to Ayodhya and conquered the Himalaya region It is not possible to say how far the account of Vakpatiraja is correct or not However, we get certain confirmations of this account from various

sources The Nalanda stone inscription refers to Yasovarman as the Lokpala, guardian of the world, "who has risen after placing his foot on the heads of all the kings and has completely removed tile terriffic darkness in the form of all his foes by the diffusion of the rays of his sword and who shines as the refulgent sun in all quarters for awakening the lotus representing the whole earth" The view of Dr R C Majumdar and Dr R S Tripathi is that this Yasovarman was a ruler of Kanauj whose exploits have been mentioned in a Gaudavaho but Hirananda Sastri does not accept the view The Nalanda inscription as well as a city founded after his name in Magadha bear out the truth of the remark of the Gaudavaho that Yasovarman killed the king of Magadha and Gauda and thus spread his sway up to the eastern sea

We learn from some inscriptions that during the reign of Chalukya king Vinayaditya (681-696 A D) of Badami, his son Vijayaditya fought with the "lord of the whole of northern regions" (Sakalottara-pathanatha), who in all probability was Yasovarman It is stated that to begin with the Chalukya king won some success but ultimately he was captured by his enemy This event seems to have occurred in 695-696 A D It spread anarchy throughout the kingdom for the time being

As regards the Parasikas, it is to be observed that the Muslims invaded Western-India in the first quarter of the 8th century Both the Gurjara King Jayabhata III and the Chalukya prince Pulakesin Avanijanasraya inflicted defeats on them It is possible that Yasovarman also came into contact with them during his movements somewhere in Western India and Vakpatiraja understood them as Parasikas

As regards Central India, it is stated in Chinese sources that a 'king of chat region sent his Buddhist minister to the court of China in 731 A D This ruler of Cenral India has been identified with Yasovarman by P C Bagchi As regards the Punjab and North-West, it is stated in the Gaudavaho that Yasovarman marched through Marudesai,Srikantha and Kuruksetra There is a reference in the Nalanda stone inscription to a minister of Yasovarman in charge of northern regions who acted as the Warden of the Marches, and rivalled and excelled the Tikina It is known that a Western Turk King adopted the title of Sahitegin or Tikina and issued coins between 630 and 658 A D, These coins show that he ruled over Afghanistan and North-Western regions It is believed that he received Hiuen Tsang at his capital in 644 A D It is possible that his successors used the title of Tikina and made some depredations into North-Western India in the anarchy and confusion which followed the death of Harsha and advanced deep into the interior That may be the cause of the intervention of Yasovarman in Eastern Punjab Yasovarman's minister and expelled the intruders and kept a strong guard at the grontier The result of this victory was that Yasovarman's rule was established in North-West

Yasovarman had friendly relations with Lalitaditya Muktapida, King of Kashmir, throughout the greater part of his long reign, It appears that the threat from the Tibetans brought them together However, the relations between them worsened after 736 A D There is no definite information regarding the cause of the difference between the two It appears that the state of Jalandhara, was the bone of contention between Yasovarman and Lalitaditya This region was frequently invaded and annexed by the

king of Kashmir and Central India which implies that it repeatedly changed hands between Lalitaditya and Yasovarman It appears that Yasovarman and Lalitaditya claimed to have conquered this region of the Tikina princes and acquired parmountcy over them Turki princes who were chagrined by their defeat at the hands of Yasovarman and the annexation of some of their territories by him, submitted themselves to Lalitaditya and instigated him to help them to recover their dominion The Turkish minister, Cankuna, played a leading part in the campaign of Lalitaditya against Yasovarman in the Punjab and after the war, Lalitaditya gave Jalandhara, Lohara and other territories to the Turki princes It is stated that the hostilities between the two rulers continued for many years and ultimately they decided to conclude the same A dispute arose as to whose name should come first in the preamble to the peace treaty As both parties were adamant, the negotiations broke down and the fighting started once again Ultimately, Yasovarman was defeated and he made his submission Yasovarman was probably allowed to rule as a feudatory as the remark in Rajatarangini that "he became a panegyrist of Lalitaditya's virtues" implies The only territorial gain of the victory was the Punjab, Jallandhara, Kangra and Punch which were given to the attendants of the conqueror It appears that after the death of Lalitaditya, Kanauj became independent But the name of the ruler is not known The history of Kanauj- after Yasovarman is not definite

It was in this atmosphere that a large number of states came into existence in Northern India and no wonder there was a struggle for supremacy among them Four states took part in the struggle and those were Kanauj, Kashmir, Magadha and the Rashtrakutas For some time, the Pratiharas of

Kanauj became supreme Later on their place was taken by the Pala kings The Rashtrakutas held sway towards the west and south of the Deccan After the passing away of the Palas, Northern India was divided among the Chalukyas of Anhilwada, Chandellas of Jejakabhukti, Kachchhakapaghapas of Gwalior, Chedis of Dahala, Paramaras of Malawa, Guhilas of Southern Rajputana and Chahamanas of Sakambhari

24

Social and Cultural Conditions

After the downfall of the Gupta Empire, a large number of states appeared in Northern India From 606 to 647, Harsha was able to set up a powerful state in Northern India, but after his death, a large number of states again appeared in Northern India We had the Pratihara Empire at Kanauj The Palas ruled in Bengal and Bihar There were the rulers of the Chandellas, the Kalachuris, the Parmaras, the Chahamanas, the Guhilas, the Tomaras and Shahis There were separate ruler of Kashmir All of these states were independent states and they struggled for supremacy There was no strong Government in the country It is intended to explain the religious, social, economic and cultural conditions of Northern India during this period

In the post-Gupta period, the caste system prevailed in which the Brahmanas occupied the highest position They enjoyed special privileges The punishments awarded to them for offences were very light as compared with others Medhatithi (825-900 A D) forbids not only corporal punishment but even a money fine to be inflicted upon a guilty Brahmana Brahamanas were granted villages free from taxes All the taxes which were previously collected by the king from the villages, were now transferred to the Brahmanas They also got the right to govern the people living in the donated villages The officials of the king and royal retainers were not allowed to enter

die gifted villages To begin with', the ruler generally retained the right to punish the thieves, but later or the beneficiaries were authorised to punish all criminal offenders The result was that the Brahmanas not only collected taxes from the peasants and artisans but also maintained law and order in the villages granted to them Villages were granted to the Brahamanas for ever and that undermined the position of the king

The Brahamanas laid great stress on the purity of blood and made the rules regarding marriages, food and choice of professions more rigid than before In spite of that, many Brahmanas became warriors and adopted the profession of Kshatriyas Some Brahmanas became traders and adopted the profession of Vaisyas In the case of Kshatriyas, many of them like the Pratiharas, Chahamanas and Gultila's were originally Brahamanas but later on became Kshatriyas Many foreigners such as the Hunas and indigenous tribes such as the Gonds were regarded as Kshatriyas when they adopted tile profession of warriors In the Vaisya caste were included many Kshatriyas who had adopted the profession of traders

The Rajputs were considered as members of the Kshatriya caste during this period The Rajputs included members of many castes such as Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, and even foreign races such as the Hunas and some indigenous tribes such as the Gonds

There is no unanimity of opinion among the scholars regarding the origin of the Rajputs There are four important theories regarding the origin of the Rajputs One view is that the Rajputs were the descendants of the four brave warriors who were born out of the firepit at Mount Abu This is called the Agnikula origin of the Rajputs According to the second

theory, the Rajputs were the descendants of the Vedic Kshatriyas The advocates of this view are G H Ojha and C V Vaidya The third view is that the Rajputs were the descendants of foreigners The fourth view is that the Rajputs were the descendants of the indigenous tribes such as the Gonds and Bhars The view that is accepted is that all the Rajput families were neither the descendants of the foreigners nor those of the indigenous tribes It appears that all the royal families whether they were descendants of Vedic Kshatriyas, Brahmanas, foreigners or indigenous tribes which protected the country from foreigners and established some sort of peace and order, were called Rajput

The Vaisyas were generally traders, They had given up the profession of farming which was now done by the Sudras The status of Vaisyas in society degenerated to such an extent that there was hardly any difference between the status of a Vaisya and that of a Sudra

The Sudras were organised according to their professions such as farmers, artisans, potters, gardeners, carpenters, goldsmiths, tailors, shepherds, stone-cutters, etc They considered themselves belonging to a particular sub-caste according to their profession The condition of the Sudras who became farmers, improved They could perform their religious rites by practising charity and constructing wells and inns for the benefit of the common people In spite of that, the attitude of the orthodox section of society towards them did not change According to Parasara, a law-giver of that period, eating a Sudra's food, association with a Sudra, sitting on the same seat with a Sudra and taking lessons from a Sudra were acts which dragged a person down Even the food cooked by a Sudra for Brahmanas was forbidden The touch or

even the sight of a Sudra was considered as an act of pollution The teaching of the Vedas was forbidden in the vicinity of Sudras The view of Medhatithi is that the dead bodies of Sudras, Vaisyas, Kshatriyas and Brahmanas must be carried out of the city by the south, west, north and east gates respectively

The Chandalas were employed for the execution of criminals They were required to wear the clothes of the dead They were to live outside the village They were not to touch others, They were to wear distinctive signs while going about their business If the shadow of a Chandala fell on a twice-born the latter was required to have a bath

There was a serious crisis in the social order The Varna society was based on the producing activities of the peasants who were called Vaisyas and labourers who were called Sudras The taxes collected by the royal officers from the Vaisyas enabled the kings to pay salaries to their officials and soldiers, reward their priests and spend money on their requirements The difficulty arose when the Varnas or social classes refused to discharge the functions assigned to them The lower orders arrogated to themselves the status and functions of the higher orders They refused to pay taxes and render labour services That led to intermixture of social classes The Varna barriers were attacked because the producing masses were oppressed with heavy taxes and impositions and were denied protection by the kings Several measures were adopted to overcome the crisis One of the important measures was to grant lands to priests and officials in lieu of their salaries and remuneration The merit of that device was that it put tire burden of collecting taxes and maintaining law and order on the beneficiaries of the donated lands The doners also brought new land under cultivation By implanting

Brahmanas in the conquered tribal areas, the tribal people were taught the Brahmanical way of life and the desirability of obeying the ruler

Frequent seizures of power and land grants gave rise to several categories of landed people When a person acquired land and power, he naturally sought a high position in society He might belong to a lower Varna but he might be favoured with land grants generously That created difficulties because although he was economically well-off, he was socially very low Formerly all things in society were granded according to the Varnas but now they came to be determined according to the landed possessions of a person

From the seventh century onwards, a large number of new castes were created Thousands of mixed castes were created on account of the connection of Vaisya women with men of lower castes The Sudras and the untouchables were divided into countless sub-castes The same was the case with the Brahmanas and the Rajputs The number of castes increased on account of the nature of the economy in which the people could not move from One place to another Although the people living in different areas followed the same occupation, they became divided into sub-castes according to the territory to which they belonged Many tribal people were admitted into Hindu society on account of the land giants granted to the Brahmanas in the aboriginal tracts Most of those people were entrolled as Sudras and mixed castes Every tribe was given the status of a separate caste in Hindu society

During this period, the institution of slavery existed Vijnanesvara refers to 15 kinds of slaves However, we come across four kinds of slaves in the contemporary literature Kritadasas were those slaves

who had been purchased There seems to have been a trade in slaves during that period Rinadasas were those persons who were reduced to the status of slaves on account of their inability to pay their debts Svavikrayi were those persons who sold themselves as slaves in times of famines to maintain themselves Dhvajahrita were those persons who were captured by the victorious rulers as prisoners of war and had to work as slaves The slaves were required to unclean work such as cleaning the latrines, sweeping the roads, collecting refuse and lifting the leavings of food, etc In some cases, the slaves were required to cultivate the lands of the priests Female slaves helped their mistresses in the household work Some of them were also used for sexual enjoyment by their masters

It appears that there was an increase in the number of slaves during this period The feudal lords were very often at war with their neighbours and the persons who were taken prisoners in those wars were made slaves The Muslim invasions also resulted in prisoners of war who were made slaves During famines, many persons sold themselves as slaves

As a general rule, girls were given in marriage by their guardians, but love marriages were also known The Gandharva form of marriage was Censured by Medhatithi Medhatithi would make marriages of Brahmanas with Kshatriyas and Vaisya women altogether exceptional, while forbidding the marriage of it Brahmana with Sudra girl A woman was allowed to take a second husband in the event of 5 calamities, viz , when her husband was lost or unheard of, or was dead, or had adopted the life of a recluse, or was impotent or had become an outcaste

There was great emphasis on the purity of sexual life Heavy punishments were inflicted on those who

were guilty of the offence of adultery In some cases, both the man and woman were put to death In other cases, lesser punishments were inflicted

Married women were required to be devoted to their husbands and also obey them They were also required to serve them This was so if the husband followed the righteous path It was the duty of the husband to maintain his wife under all circumstances The faithful wife was not to be abandoned even if she was disagreeable in look or harsh in speech, etc The widow was required to live a life of strict celibacy and self-restraint The rite of Sati was enjoined by some authorities but condemned by others However, the wives of kings sometimes burnt themselves on the funeral preys of their husbands but it was for them to exercise their option in the matter The custom of dedicating maidens for service in temple was prevalent The class of prostitutes known as Ganikas existed as a distinct social unit during this period A Ganika was expected to possess high qualifications, both of body and mind The people had a high standard of living This is proved by the names of a number of professions mentioned by Medhatithi The variety of garments and ornaments current in those times was remarkable There are references to woollen blankets, petticoats, armlets, neck ornaments, finger rings, waiste-bands and women's leg ornaments Woman's golden as well as jewelled girdles and large ear ornaments are mentioned by Rajasekhara Ladies of high families habitually delighted in the display of ornaments, There is a reference to a woman adorned with ear-rings, rows of bracelets, it ruby encrusted girdle and emerald-anklets The same lady at night time appeared in a robe of Chinese silk with a pearl necklace around her neck, camphor powder on her bosom and sandal paste thickly applied to her limbs

and she looked like a goddess descended from the moon

As regards popular amusements, it was the fashion for high-born girl to play with balls On the occasion of swing festival, they enjoyed the swing from trees in a garden There are references to dancing for recreation by ladies and dramatic representations in honour of deities Reference is made to the Goshthi of persons in high life, of a queen and other women There are references to young pleasure-seekers, with their mistresses, excursions to gardens, excursions for drinking and water-sports

While the three kinds of Sura or wines were forbidden to the Brahmanas, the kshatriya, and the Vaisyas were permitted to drink the last two kinds The Brahmana drinker of Sura alone was guilty of mortal sin and was liabie to corporal punishment The literary evidence shows that both men and women, other than Brahmanas, freely drank wine

While Brahmana women did not drink wine, Kshatriya and other women indulged in excessive drinking when they gathered together on festive occasions

The people maintained a high level of personal cleanliness and comfort, There were elaborate rules for daily observance of purifications of the body, cleaning of the teeth and bathing by the house-holder

The people believed in omens and portents The Matsyapurana gives a long and systematic account of omens, classifying them under appropriate hands and prescribing adequate remedies for averting their evil effects There were rules for the propitiation of the planets

During this period, the Vikramasila monastery

was an advanced centre of learning like Nalanda and Valabhi in the seventh century A D There is sufficient evidence to show that there existed during this period organised educational institutions which were founded and maintained by the people from the king down to humble individuals

25

Rashtrakutas

There are many theories regarding the origin of the Rashtrakutas The view of Fleet was that the Rashtrakutas were the descendants of the Rathors of the North The view of Burnell was that the Rashtrakutas were connected with the Dravidian Raddis of Andhradesa The most probable view seems to be that the Rashtrakutas of Malkhed descended from the Rastikas or Rathikas who were so important in the middle of the third century B C that they were mentioned in the edicts of Asoka

It is suggested that the designation or the Rashtrakuta arose from an official designation Officials named Rashtrakuta meaning thereby the head of a Rashtra or district are mentioned in many records The family of the imperial Rashtrakutas introduced in the 9th century a claim that it descended from the Yadu family of the Mahabharata times The court poets of the Rashtrakuta rulers up to 808 A D compared the Rashtrakuta family with the Yadu race and contended that the Rashtrakutas became as invincible with the birth of Govind III as the Yadu family became invincible with the birth of Murari or Lord Krishna The author of the Sanjan Grant of V1 A D declared Lord Krishna to be the progenitor of the Rashtrakuta family which was identified with Yadavanvaya In the later records, the Rashtrakutas were made the descendants of the eponymous Ratta, born in the family of kings who were styled Tunga and

belonged to the Satyaki branch of the Yadu-vamsa Inscriptions refer to individuals and families known as Rashtrakutas ruling in different parts of the Deccan before the collapse of the Chalukyas of Badami about the middle of the 8th Century A D Govindaraja, a, Rashtrakuta, appears to have ruled the Satara-Ratnagiri region under the Chalukya king Vikramaditya 11 about 743 A D It cannot be said definitely whether he had any relation with the earlier Rashtrakutas of the same area who ruled in the 5th and 6th centuries A D Another Rashtrakuta family ruled in the Betul and Ellichpur districts of Madhya Pradesh in the 7th and 8th centuries A D

Inscriptions and coins tell us that Rathika and Maharathi families occupied Maharashtra and portions of Karnataka in the capacity of feudatory rulers According to Dr Altekar, their original home was in Karnataka and their mother tongue was Kanarese They are described in many inscriptions as "Lords of Lattalura, the excellent town " It is pointed out that there is a Kanarese-speaking locality known as Latur in the Bidar district in former Nizam State These arguments are opposed to the view of some scholars that the Malkhed Rashtrakutas were the natives of Maharashtra The first rulers of the Rashtrakuta dynasty wereDantivarman, Indra I, Govinda 1, Karka I and IndrarajaII They do not seem to have achieved anything important As a matter of fact, we do not even know definitely where their territory was The view of Dr Altekar is that their territory was "somewhere in Berar The family must have migrated from its original home in Karnataka According to Dr Altekar, the Rashtrakuta were either the direct or the collateral descendants of the Rashtrakuta king, Nannaraja Yudhasura who was ruling at Ellichpur in Berar in the middle of the 7th centuary A D

26

Chalukyas

The Chalukyas were the dominant power in the Deccan from the 6th to the 8th century A D and then again from the 10th to the 12th century A D We have to deal with the Chalukyas of Badami or the Early Western Chalukyas, the Later Western Chalukyas of Kalyani and the Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi The Early Western Chalukyas ruled for about, two centuries from the middle of the 6th to about the middle of the 8th century when they were ousted by the Rashtrakutas The Later Western Chalukyas of Kalyani overthrew the Rashtrakutas in the second half of the 10th century and continued to rule till the end of the 12th century The Eastern Chalukyas ruled from the 7th century to the 12th century

There is a lot of controversy with regard to the origin of the Chalukyas The view of Dr V A Smith was that the Chalukyas were connected with the Chapas and so with the foreign Gurjara tribe of which the Chapas were a branch and they migrated to Rajputana from the Deccan This view is rejected by Dr D C sircar who is of the view that the Chalukyas represented an indigenous Kanarese family that claimed the status of Kshatriyas The name Chalukya is some time associated with Culika people of Uttarapathna who are supposed to have been identical with the Sogdiens Dr D C Sircar does not find any evidence in support of this view He also contends that the Sulicas, identified with the Sulkis of Orissa, had

nothing to do with the Chalukyas The Chalukyas of Badami claimed have been Haripuras They contended that they belonged to the Manavya Gotra They claimed to have been nourished by the Seven Mothers who are the mothers of mankind The Chalukyas are described as meditating on or favoured by the feet of "the holy Svamin or Svami-Mahasena or Karttikeya However, it appears that the family god of the early Chalukyas was Vishnu although they are known to have patronised the Saivas and Jains

The legendary history contained in the records of the later Chalukyas of Kalyani ascribes the origin of the Chalukya, dynasty to Manu or the Moon and associates it with Ayodhya which was the capital of Uttara Kosala It is stated that 59 kings of the Chalukya lineage ruled at Ayodhya and 16 kings ruled in Dakshinapatha There was an eclipse of their power for some time, but the glory of the family was restored Jayasimha It is stated in another inscription, that the progenitor of this dynasty was the god Brahmana He was followed by his son Svayambhuva-Manu He was followed by his son Manavya He was followed by his son Harita The latter was followed by his son Panchasikhi Hariti The latter was followed by his son Chalukyas from whom sprang the race of the Chalukyas Some records tell us that the Chalukyas were born in the lineage of Soma or the Moon who were created from the eye of Arti, the son god Brahma There are many other similar stories about the origin of Chalukyas as a mere farago of vague legend and Puranic myths of no authority or value

Rise of the of Early Western Chalukyas of Badmi The Chalukya power had a modest beginning under Jayasimha and his son Ranaraga The latter was succeeded by Pulakesin I who ruled from about 535 to 566 A D

He was the first Maharaja in his family, and he can be called the real founder of the dynasty He took tip titles such as Satyasraya, Rana vikrama Shri-Prithivi Vallabhai Sri-Vallabha or Vallabha Pulakesin performed the Hiranyagarbha, Asvamedha, Agnishtoma, Agnichayana, Vajapeya, Bahusuvarna and Paundarika sacrifices, Pulakesin I is compared with such mythical heroes as Yayati and Dilipa He is said to have been conversant with the Manava-Dharmasastra, the Puranas, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and other Itihasas Pulakesin I laid the foundations of the fort of Vatapi, modern Badami in the Bijapur District He is not credited with any specific conquest However, he ruled over the present Bijapur District with his capital at Badami

27

Pallavas

It is true that the origin of the Pallavas has been discussed by scholars for more than half a century, but unfortunately no unanimity of opinion has been arrived at Prof Rao, the latest writer on the subject, has been forced to admit that "the origin of the Pallavas has remained till now a mystery" The name Pallava resembles Pahlava so closely that scholars like B L Rice and V Venkatyya have put forward the view that the Pallavas and Pahlavas were identical Consequently, the Pallava dynasty of Kanchi should be considered as ultimately of Persian origin It is contended that after their settlement in the Sindhu Valley and Western India along with the Sakas, the Pahlavas or Parthians occupied Tondamandalam in the period of the decline of the Satavahanas Critics of this theory point out that the Pallava records do not mention the Pahlavas The foreign rulers like the Sakas did not perform Asvamedha sacrifices and consequently the Pahlavas under' the name of Pallavas could not be expected to become fond of it One of the sculptures in a temple at Kanchi, depicts a crown shaped like an elephant's scalp, similar to that worn by Demetrius on his coins But such reasoning would make Ikshvakus of Nagarjunikonda Scythians, because a 'Scythian Warrior' is found among the monuments of that place According to Jouveau-Dubreuil, sxvisakha, a Pahlava minister of Rudradaman, was the ancestor of the Pallavas of Kanchi "The Pallavas were

immigrants from the North or properly speaking from Konkan and Anatra in Dakshinapatha They came into

According to Dr Krishnaswamy Aiyangar, "We do not meet with the form Pahlava in connection with the Pallavas of Kanchi in any record of their time The word as applied to Pallavas in the first instance seems to be a translation of the Tamil word Tondaiyar and Tondaman and this finds confirmation in some of the copper plate charters which do bring in tender twigs of some kind in connection with tile eponymous name Pallava This undoubtedly is a later use of the term but gives the indication that even at that comparatively late period the traditional notion was that they were not foreigners such as the Pahlavas would have been In all the material that has been examined there is nothing to indicate either the migration of the people or even of a family that might have ultimately raised itself into a dynasty from the northwest so that the assumption of a connection between the one set of people and the other rests upon the mere doubtful ground of a possibility whereas the translation or adaptation of a southern word, in Sanskrit is very much more than a possibility as indeed a word like Dravida or Dramida would clearly indicate "

A critical study of the ancient Tamil literature shows that the Pallavas were originally connected with Ceylon An examination of the Tamil poems, Manimekalai and Chilappatikaran, shows that the destruction of the Chola capital, Puhar or Kaviripaddinam, by the sea must have occurred before the close of the third quarter of the second century A D and Killi Valavan or Nedumudi Killi, the Chola king, then moved his capital to Uraiyur According to Mudaliyar C Rasanayagam of Colombo, this Chola king had a liaison with a Naga Princess, daughter of

Valaivanam, the Naga King of Manipallavam Out of this union was born a son known as Tondaiman Ilantirayan who was created by his father, Killi Valavan, the king of Tondaimandalam with his capital at Kanchi The new dynasty founded by him took its title from the second half of the word Manipallavam, the home of his Naga mother Thus, the Pallavas who were a dynasty rather than a tribe or clan, were descended on one side from the Chola family and on the other from the Naga rulers of what is now the Jaffna peninsula in Ceylon

According to Dr K P Jayaswal, the Pallavas were a branch of the Brahmana royal dynasty of Vakatakas of the North They were militarists by profession and they carved-out a principality for themselves in the South However, the Talagunda inscription clearly states that the Pallavas were Kshtariyas

According to Prof R Sathainathaier, scholars have wandered from Persia to Ceylon in search of the original home of the Pallavas of Kanchi, but in his opinion they originated in Tondamandalarn itself It was a province in the Empire of Asoka The Pulindas were perhaps identical with the Kurumbas of Tondamandalam Tondaiyar is a Tamil rendering of Pallavas The Satavahanas conquered Tondamandalam and Pallavas became a feudatory to the Satavahanas After the collapse of the Satavahana Empire in about A D 225, the Pallavas became independent Their expansion from Kanchi to the Krishna is proved by the Mayidavolu and Hirahadagalli Prakrit copper-plate grants of Sivaskanda-varman Pallava The theory of the Tondamandalarn origin of the Pallavas of Kanchi best explains the historical facts relating to the problem of the origin

According to Rawlinson, the Pallavas rose into prominence about A D, 325 on the east coast in the country between the mouths of the Krishna and Godavari rivers They collected round themselves the Kurumbas, Maravas, Kallas and other predatory tribes and formed them into a strong and aggressive power It is significant that the word Pallava is synonymous in Tamil with rascal or robber About A D 350, the Pallavas established themselves on the cast coast and occupied the famous city of Kanchi or Conjeevaram

The view of scholars like Dr V A Smith, Dr Joveau Dubreuil, B L Rice, V Venkayya etc is that the Pallavas were foreign intruders, probably a branch of the Pahlavas or Parthians of North-Western India To quote V A Smith, "It is possible that the Pallavas were not one distinct tribe or class but a mixed population composed partly of foreigners and partly of South Indian tribes or castes different in race from the Tamils and taking their name from the title of an intruding foreign dynasty which obtained control over them and welded them into an aggressive political power " It is pointed out that inscriptions and coins make it clear that the Parthians were ruling in North-Western India in the beginning of the Christian era Moreover, at the time of the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea-(c 80 A D), the Parthians were constantly driving each other out and were occupying tile Indus valley It is possible that they penetrated into the Deccan even before the reign of Gautamiputra Satakarni It is pointed out that Gautamiputra subdued and put to the sword the Sakas, Yamunas and Pahlavas The Pallava Governors were incharge of the districts of Anarta and Saurashtra as is mentioned in the Junagadh rock inscription of Rudradaman I The defeat of the Pabhlavas by Gautamiputra, forced them to go further mouth They made inroads into

Western India and subsequently migrated to Kanchi When the Satavahanas disappeared from the scene, their place was taken by the Pallavas

The critics of the theory of the foreign origin of the Pallavas point out that the words Pallava and Pahlava may be the same philologically but hisotically they refer to different people In Rajasekhara's Bhuvankosa, the words Pallavas and Pahlavas are separately mentioned as referring to peoples occupying South India and the Trans-Indus Valley respectively Dr D C Sircar points out that if the Pahlavas and the Pallavas had been the same, there would have been some mention of the word Pahlavas in the records of the Pallavas but this is not so It is also difficult to believe that the Pallavas who were originally foreigners became so much Hinduised in a short time that they began to perform Asvameda sacrifices The performance of the Brahmanical sacrifices by the earlier Pallava kings rules out the foreign origin of the Pallavas Some sculptures at Kanchi and Mahabalipuram show the Pallava kings with an elephant skin on their heads It is probable that they imitated certain Greek coins of the second century B C No conclusion in favour of the foreign origin of the Pallavas can, be drawn from this fact A similar reasoning would, make the Iksvakus of Nagarjunikonda Scythians because a Scythian warrior is found in the monuments of that place It is stated in the Pallava inscriptions, that the Pallavas belonged to the Bharadvaja Gotra and that they descended from Asvathama

Dr S K. Iyengar is the exponent of the Tamil origin of the Pallavas He relies upon the equation in Tamil literature of the Pallavas with Tondaiyar Pallava kings are called at many places Tondaiman or Tondaiyarkon. The territory of the Pallavas is referred

to as Tundaka Visaya or Tundaka Rashtra The term 'Tondon' in Tamil means a slave which is suggestive of the position which the Pallavas bore to the Satavahanas After the fall of the Satavahanas, the Pallavas- succeeded in annexing a great part of the Chola territory and their, territory came to be known as Tondaimandalanm The earliest inscriptions of the Pallavas are similar to the Nasik inscriptions of Gautamiputra Satakarni Their accounts are also similar to those of the Satavahanas It is pointed out that this part of the country passed from the Satavahanas to the Pallavas, However, critics pointed out that the early Pallavas issued their charters in Prakrit and they patronised Sanskrit literature rather than Tamil literature

There is also a theory about the Telugu origin of the Pallavas The earliest king mentioned in Telugu tradition was one Trilochan Pallava who is said to have defeated and slain the first Chalukya king It is stated, in the Mahavamsa that many monks from Pallan Bogga attended the consecration ceremony performed by Duttagami Pallava Bogga is identified by some scholars with the dominions of Kala in Andhra The inscriptions of the Pallavas before Simhavishnu are found in Andhradesa " The Telegu country, south of the Krishna, formed the bulk of the Pallava kingdom till the last quarter of the sixth century A D "

The view of C V yaidya was that the Pallavas belonged to the lam Aryan stock as the people of Maharashtra The Pallavas spoke Maharashtri Prakrit for centuries and even retained it in Kanchi in the midst of the Dravidian languages

According to H Krishna Sastri, the Pallavas were a class that originated from an inter-mingling of

the Brahmanas with the indigenous Dravidian tribe This view "is confirmed partly by a curious statement made in Rayakotto Copper Plates that Asvathama, the Brahmana founder of the race, married a Naga woman and had by her a son called Skandasisya Other copper plates which relate a similar story, mention in the plates of Skandasisya the eponymous king Pallava after whom the family came to be called Pallava Hence it appears almost probable that the Pallavas like the Kadambas of Banabasi, the Nolambas of Mysore, the Matsyas of Oddavadi and other similar dynasties were the product of Brahmana inter-connections with the Dravidian races as the stories related of their origin indicate" The view is that, the Pallavas belong to the caste of the Braham-Kshatriyas They were Brahmanas in origin and Kshatriya by Marina or profession

The Prakrit charters mention several kings including Sivaskandavar- man who ruled probably about the beginning of the fourth Century A D He was probably the greatest of the early Pallavas and his dominion extended from the Krishna to South Penner and the Bellary District He performed sacrifices like the Asvamedha

28
Cholas

The Chola kingdom was a very ancient one There is a reference to the Cholas in the Mahabharata They are also mentioned in the account of Megasthenes and the inscriptions of Asoka Katyayana also refers to the Cholas The Mahavamsa refers to the relations between the Cholas and the rulers of Ceylon Ptolemy also refers to the Cholas The Sangam literature refers to many Chola princes who were models of justice The Periplus gives us information about the ports and inland towns of the Chola territory The kingdom of the Cholas included Madras, several other districts and the greater part of the Mysore State

The main source of information for the history of the Chola period is the large number of inscriptions of that period Rajaraja I conceived the idea of pre-fixing to his inscriptions a get historical introduction recounting the main achievements of his reign and kept up-to-date by additions made to it from time to time The example of Rajaraja was followed by his successors and the result is that we have a formal record of exceptional value of the transactions of each reign Most of these historical introductions have been the subject of scholarly discussion and elucidation by Hultzsch and Venkayya in the earlier Volumes of the South Indian Inscriptions All of these inscriptions are not purely historical in aim and character However, the inscription at Tiruvendipuram recording in detail the difficulties of Rajaraja III and the relief he got

from the Hoysala King, is purely an historical inscription

Generally speaking, inscriptions record gifts and endowments of a public or private nature, usually to temples, Mathas and Brahmans Sometimes the construction of a temple or its renovation or the setting up of a new image forms the subject of an inscription Sometimes, an inscription refers to the maintenance of a lamp in a temple This was done by gifts of money or cattle calculated at so much or so many per lamp Among the donors, we find not only kings and their officials but also occupational and commercial guilds, caste organisations, military groups, village assemblies and many private individuals, both men and women

Many inscriptions were intended to publish and preserve in a more or less permanent form decisions and agreements on matters of public importance We find royal orders on taxation and land revenue, resolutions of village assemblies on their own constitutional arrangements, their awards in disputes between communities or other corporate organisations, judgments delivered against persons guilty of theft, murder and other crimes and political compacts between powerful feudatory chieftains of particular localities Inscriptions on temple walls served the purpose of a public registration office by conserving a trustworthy record of sales, mortgages and other forms of transfers of property rights in village lands

A large number of temples were built during the Chola period The walls of those temples, their pillars and their plinths were usually covered with inscriptions in course of time This is amply illustrated by the great temple of Rajarajeswar in Tanjore In certain cases inscriptions were engraved on the walls

of brick temples also The copper-plate grants known by the names Anbil, Karandai etc as well as the Kanyakumari stone inscription and the Charala plates of Virarajendra give long lengendary genalogies intended to bring out the solar origin of the Chola dynasty The Udayen-diram plates of Prithivipati II Hastimalla give a much shorter list of legendary ancestors of Vijayalaya

The stone inscriptions often contain astronomical data which haw yielded results of great value of Chola chronology This has been possible through the efforts of scholars like Kielhorn and others There are some inscriptions which give a full account of the different stages that intervene between the issue of a royal order and its actual execution This was particularly so in revenue matters A critical study of those inscriptions gives us useful information on the administrative machinery and practice of those times They also tell us about the various taxes, tolls and dues of various kinds which were charged in those days We also learn a lot about the society, religion, art and crafts of the Chola period from the Chola inscriptions

Inscriptions from the neighbouring States throw side-lights on Chola history This is particularly so of the Rashtrakuta inscriptions of the time of Krishna III, inscriptions of the Eastern and Western Chalukyas and the Eastern Gangas Some information is got from the Hoysala inscriptions The same is true of inscriptions of prominent feudatory dynasties.

29

Pandyas

The Pandyas occupied the region comprising the modern districts of Madura and Tinnevelly, part of Trichinopoly and sometimes also of Travancore In the time of Pliny, the capital of the country was at, Madura, although the kingdom had existed from much earlier days The Pandyas were known to Katyayana the Sanskrit grammarian, who flourished in the fourth century B C Megasthenes was told strange things about the Pandya kingdom He was informed that "Herakles begot a daughter in India whom he called Pandaia To her he assigned that portion of India which lies to the southward and extends to the sea while lie distributed the people subject to her rule into 365 villages, giving orders that one village each day should bring to the treasury the royal tribute so that the queen might always have the assistance of those men whose turn it was to pay the tribute in coercing those who for the time being were defaulters in their payment " This female ruler was credited with having received from her hero father 500 elephants, 4,000 cavalry and 1,30,000 infantry She possessed a great treasure in the fishery for pearls

It is stated that a mission was sent by king Pandion to Augustus Caesar in 20 B C The author of the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea (c A D 80) and Ptolemy (c A D 140) were well-informed about the names and positions of the marts and ports of the Pandya country

The ancient Tamil literature refers to many kings who belonged to an extremely early period However, the first Pandya king about whom some definite data can be given was Nedum-Cheliyan He lived in the second century of the Christian era He was a contemporary of Gajabahu I of Ceylon whose date has been fixed by Prof Geiger between A D 173 and 191 It is pointed out that a remarkable characteristic of the Pandya State at that time was the maintenance at Madura of a flourishing literary academy or Sangam whose members produced literature of a very high quality The Kural of Tiruvalluva was written about A D 100 "The Epic of the Anklet" and the "Jewel-Belt" were written a century or so later

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Greater India

According to Dr R C Majumdar, "The Indian colonies in the Far East must ever remain as the high watermark of maritime and colonial enterprise of the ancient Indians " The latest researches of Indian and foreign scholars have also exploded the theory of splendid isolation of the Indians in the past It has been proved beyond doubt that the Indians of the past were not stay-at-home people, but went out of their country for exploration, trade and conquest Dr R C Majumdar points out that from very remote past, the Indians possessed a vague idea of the countries in the Far East The relation originated in trade and the tradition of fabulous wealth earned by that trade gave rise to all sorts of mythical stories about Suvarnadvipa or the golden land The steady growth of the trade is reflected in the Jakarta, Brihatkatha, Kautilya's Arthasastra and the Milindapanha According to Dr K P Jayaswal, "Further India was recognised as part of India in the Bharasiva-Vakataka period In the Matsya Purana, for the first time we find that recognition Between the Himavat and the Sea Bharatavarsha stands, but it covers a larger area on account of Indians living in eight more islands (Dvipas) All these Dvipas were to the east The Malaya Peninsula was well-known to Indians at that time, a fact evidenced by an inscription of the 4th century A D on a pillar in the present district of Wellesley Burma was known as Indradvipa Ceylon

was known as Tamraparni Similarly, Cambodia, Nicobar, Sumatra, Java and Borneo were also known "

The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea written by a Greek sailor of Egypt in the first century A D mentions many ports of India then existing on its Western and Eastern coasts Ptolemy in his Geography written in the second century A D refers to the ports of Malaya Peninsula, Java, and Sumatra and the Indian port of Palura from which voyages were directly made to Malaya Peninsula

The Agni Purana, along with many other Puranas, calls India proper as Jambudvipa as distinguished from Dvipantara or India of the islands or overseas India A Sanskrit-Chinese dictionary compiled in Central Asia in the seventh and eighth -centuries calls the countries situated in the Southern Seas as Jipattala which Sylvain Levi interprets as the Indian archipelago and the neighbouring islands These two Indias were called by the name of Bharatavarsha which included the nine islands of Dvipantara-Bharata, each separated from the other by sea The names of those islands were Indra-dvipa, Kaseru, Tamravarna Gabhastiman, Nagadvipa, Saumya, Gandharva and Varuna

Masudi, the Arab geographer, states in his work called 'Meadows of Gold' written in 943 A D that India in those days "extended over sea and land and bordered on the country called Zabag (Sumatra or Greater Java) ruled by the king of these islands "

The Kaumudi-Mahotsava is a drama of the seventh century A D It describes the life of a gallant whose activities were not confined to India alone but also extended to many islands We are told that after visiting ten free girls of the fashionable cities within India proper, he went in search of pleasure to a city

called Katahanagara which is taken as one of the chief cities of the Sailendra kings

Sylvain Levi has shown from references in the Ramayana, Mahabharata, Mahaniddesa and Brihat-Katha that the products of Burma and Malaya Peninsula were known to Indian merchants and sailors and also some of its ports such as Suvarnakudya, Suvarnabhurni, Takkolam, Tamlin and Javam from at least first century A D

The Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudra Gupta shows that his paramount power was recognised by "the people of Simhala and all other islands", by their rulers tendering to him, their personal homage, the service of maidens and applying for charters stamped with the imperial seal to reinstate them in their kingdoms

There is a passage in the Buddhist text Niddesa which belongs to a period not later than the second century A D It describes the various kinds of torments which a sailor experienced while he sailed the high seas in a boat and visited various countries in search of wealth and enjoyment There, is a reference to 24 localities to which the merchants voyaged The following story of Sanudasa is given in the Niddesa "Sanudasa joins the gang of the adventurer Achera, who is preparing An expedition to the Land of Gold (Suvarna-bhumi) They cross the sea and land at ' the foot of a mountain They climb up to the top by catching hold of creepers (Yetra) This is the 'creepers path' (Vetrapatha) On the plateau there is a river which changes into stone everything that falls into it They cross it by holding on to the bamboos which overhang the banks This is 'the bamboo's path' (Vamsapatha) Further on, they meet a narrow path between precipices They light a fire with wet

branches, the smoke attracts some Kiratas who come and propose to sell them some goats, the adventurers get on those goats, the only animals sure footed enough to be -able to follow the narrow edge without feeling giddy This is the 'goats' path' (Ajapatha) The adventurers do not come to the end of it without some difficulty, as another gang is approaching from the opposite direction A struggle ensues, but Achera's troops are able to pass through after having thrown their enemies into the ravines Sanudasa begins to feel indignant at the fierceness of the gold-seekers Achera orders his followers to slay the goats and to put on their skins with the inside out Huge birds will mistake these men for a heap of raw meat, come and carry them away to their aerie It is there that the gold is! Sanudasa attempts to save the goat he was riding but companions are pitiless Everything takes place as Achera foretold, but the bird which carries off Sanudasa is attacked by another bird which attempts to steal his prey The goat's skin bursts open and Sanudasa falls in a tank which is in the heart of a luxurious forest The next day he comes to a river the bank of which are of golden sand nearby, them is a hermitage from which a hermit comes out "

The fact of Indian expansion outside India stands undisputed to-day The question is what forces were responsible for taking the people of India outside There is no unanimity of opinion among the scholars However, it cannot be denied that trade definitely played an important part The Indians went out to carry on trade with the islands in the Far East Some of them went out to spread Hinduism and Buddhism Some went out on account of the spirit of adventure in them Probably, those colonies provided an outlet to the surplus population in India In certain cases, all the above factors or some of them combined to induce

the Indians to go outside their country On this point Dr R C Majumdar observes "The literary evidence leaves no doubt that trade was the chief stimulus of this intercourse between India and the Far East Apart from the fact that the folk-tales deal mostly with merchants and seekers of wealth, the geographical names, applied by the Indians, all refer to minerals, metals or some industrial and agricultural products In addition to- Suvarna-dvipa and its variant forms, we may refer to Rupyakadvipa, Tamradvipa, Yavadvipa, Lanka-dvipa, Sankha-dvipa, Karpuradvipa, Narikela-dvipa, etc "

"In course of time trade and commercial activity led to the establishment of political and cultural relations The traders spread Indian culture along with their wares and, as opportunities offered, some of them permanently settled in these places and even seized political power Adventurous Kshatriya princes came to seek their fortunes and established kingdoms Individual monks or bands of missionaries also came to preach their religious doctrines "

The question has been asked what routes were followed by the Indians going to the Far East Dr Majumdar is of the opinion that so far as the sea route was concerned, there seems to have been emigrations both from Eastern and Western Coasts From a very early period, there was a regular trade intercourse between the coast of Bengal and the Far East Tamralipti was the most important sea port In the Mahajanaka jataka, reference is made to voyages between Champa and Suvarnabhumi Other trade routes are mentioned by Ptolemy and reference is also made in the Periplus

As regards the period of Indian expansion outside, four different lines of evidence point out the first two

centuries of the Christian era as the time limit before which these colonies were accomplished facts (1) Ptolemy writing in the middle of the second century has used a large number of geographical names of Sanskrit origin in Indo-China (2) When the Chains or the people of Annam appear in history towards the close of the second century, they were already under a Hindu or Hinduised dynasty (3) The Chinese had intercourse with the Hindu kingdom of Fon-Han in tile first half of the third century A D At that time, the throne was occupied by a usurper and two kings had already ruled before him for a period of 93 years This takes us back to the first half of the second century as the date of the foundation of the dynasty (4) An ambassador of a small Hindu Kingdom (Tenasserim) who visited the Chinese,, Court in 515 A D is reported to have said that their kingdom was founded more than 400 years ago

Indian culture spread to Champa, Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Bali, Kambuja, Siam, Malaya Peninsula, Sailendra Empire, Ceylon, Burma, China and Tibet It is desirable to study in detail the story of Indian expansion in each of these places separately

31

Sangam Age

The Sangam Age in South India is a landmark in her history Dr K.K, Pillai writes that "The Sangam is a unique institution of the early Tamils It has lent its name to a number of classical works with the result that Sangam literature and Sangam Age have acquired certain specific connotations, though, in respect of details, doubts still continue persist " The word 'Sangam' is the Tamil form of the Sanskrit word Sangha which means a group of persons or an association The Tamil Sangam was an academy of poets and bards who flourished in three different periods and in different places under the patronage of the Pandyan kings According to the tradition, the first Sangam was founded by Sage Agastya and its seat was Thenmadurai (South Madurai) which is said to have submerged in the sea The eminent members of the first Sangam, were Agastya, Murugavel, Mudinagarayar, Murinjiyur etc As many as 4449 poets and bards were associated with this Sangarn which lasted for 4400 years and was patronised by 89 kings The important works of this Sangam were Agathiyam, Paripadal, Mudukurugu and Xalariyavirai The seat of' the second Sangarn was Kabadapuram, another capital of the Pandyas Its important members were Agastya Irundaiyar, Tolkappiyar, Karungoli, Pandurangan, Tiraiyanamaran, Vellurkappiyanar etc There were 3700, poets of this Sangam which was patronised by 59 kings and lasted for 3700 years The

important works of the second Sangam were Tolkappiyam Mapuranam, Isainunukam, Bhuta-puranam, Kali, Kuruku, Vendali etc The seat of the third Sangam was the present Madurai in Tamil Nadu It had 449 poets and the important ones among them were Nakkirar, Iraiyanar, Kapilar, Paranar, Sattanar, Auvikyar etc The third Sangam lasted for 1850 years and was patronised by 49 kings The important works of this Sangam were Nedumthokai, Kurumthokai, Nattinai, Ainkurunnu, Pathittupattu, Paripadla, Kuttu, Vari etc Historically, only the third Sangam is accepted as having existed in the early centuries of the Christian era

The Age of the Sangam is the age to which the Sangam literature belonged It is difficult to give an exact estimate of the period, but it is possible to suggest a period within which such literature was produced and the political and social life depicted in that literature prevailed The historians of South India agree that the Sangarn age was the period of a few centuries immediately preceding or succeeding the Christian era and some of the earliest extant Tamil works belonged to that period The main reasons which compel us to accept the early centuries of the Choristian era as the Sangam age are clear Many of the poems constituting the Sangam anthologies as also the twin epics of Silappadikaram or Manimekalai describe a society the general features of which are borne out by references we get from the Greek and Roman classical writers of 70 the early, centuries of the Christian era The centuries from the beginning of the Pallava age (Sixth century A D) witnessed a continuous culture which underwent no violent changes during that period Silappadikaram says that Gajabahu, king of Ceylon, attended the worship of Kannagi-the Goddess of chastity-instituted by the

Chera king Senguttuvan Gajabahu ruled from 173 to 191 A D So Silappadikaram written by Senguttuvan's brother Ilango belonged to the second century A D Manimekalai written by Sattanar also belonged to that period It is rightly said that Gajabahu-Senguttuvan synchronism is the sheet-anchor 'of the chronology of Tamil history The Pallavas became important in South India even by the sixth century A D The complete absence of any preference of the Pallavas in the Sangam works is an additional proof that the anthologies and the epics belonged to the pre-Pallava period The conclusion of Dr N Subramaniam is that the entire body of the eight anthologies, the ten poems, the eighteen minor works and the two epics (SiIppadikaram and Manimekalai) belonged to the pre-Pallava period, that is, to the few centuries immediately preceding and following the Christian era Possibly Tolkappiam belongs to an age slightly earlier

It is difficult to determine the chronology of the works of the Sangam age Modern writers have dismissed the first two Sangams as pure myths The inclusion of supernatural agency into the Sanganis, incredibly long reigns ascribed to the Pandyan kings and the astoundingly long periods of duration assigned to the Sangams positively weaken the historicity of the Sangam tradition The generally accepted period of the Sangam, especially the last one, is somewhere in between 500 B C and 300 A D However L D Swamikkannu Pillai assigns the Sangam age to the seventh and eighth century A D Dr N P Chakravarthy pushes it back to the sixth century A D While S K Iyengar, S Pillai and K K Pillai place these works in the first and second century, Raghava lyer, Sesha Iyer, Ganapati Rao and others place them in the third and fourth centuries A D on astronomical calculations The Academy at Madurai produced a

large mass of literature dealing with a large variety of subjects ranging from grammar to pure romance Social customs, religious practices, popular deities, art of war, folk tales, foreign trade and philosophical problems were dealt by the Sangam poets The Sangarn seems to have done very useful work in the literary field It collected the scattered literary pieces, edited them properly and tried to preserve them "It was a sort of parliament of letters, a censor board and an editorial committee That we don't have examples of such Academies elsewhere in India can be no reason why we should wholly reject the local tradition about them "

32

Republics in Ancient India

It is the view of some writers that monarchy was the only form of Government known to the people of ancient India and what are claimed to be republics were nothing more than tribal states According to that view, the Malava-Gana and the Yaudheya-Gana were not the Malava and Yaudheya republics but tribes of the Malavas and Yaudheyas respectively This view is not accepted by Dr A S Altekar who points out that there is ample evidence to show that even if we grant that the Malavas and the Yaudheyas were tribes, they had also their republican form of Government It can be proved beyond doubt that Gana indicated a certain type of state different from monarchy He refers to two passages in support of his view When some merchants from Madhyadesa travelling in the Deccan were asked by a local ruler as to who the kings were in their respective homelands, they replied, "Sir, in the countries of some of us there are kings, but in those of others, there is Gana or republican Government " There is a similar reference in a Jain work entitled Acharangasutra A large number of coins have been found in different parts of India bearing legends referring not to the kings of the Yaudheyas, the Malavas and tile Arjunayanas, but to their Ganas Those references are not to their tribes but their republican states which authorised the issue of those coins We have also the testimony of many contemporary Greek writers to show that there were

many forms of non-monarchical states in ancient India It is stated that when Porus became a faithful subordinate of Alexander, the latter added a large province to his kingdom, subduing inhabitants whose form of Government was republican "

The conclusion of Dr Altekar is that we can legitimately describe the ancient Gana states of India as republics in the same sense in which the standard works on political science describe the States of Athens, Sparta or Venice as republics

Monarchy was not the only form of Government prevalent in the Vedic period It was not uniform and similar in all parts of the country

As regards republics, it is universally acknowledged that they existed in a flourishing state in the time of Buddha and Mahavira and therefore they must have originated centuries earlier so as to attain that much of maturity in statecraft and constitutional ways

The word Gana has been used forty-six times in the Rigveda, nine times in the Atharvaveda and at several places in the Brahmanas Forty-nine or sixtythree Marutas are called Ganas The Ganas of Devas are also mentioned Indra, Maruta, Brihaspati and Brahmanaspati are described as Ganapatis In one Rigvedic passage, the leader of the Gana has the title of Rajan

The View of Dr Altekar is that the passages in the Vedas probably refer to an oligarchy where power was vested in a council of nobles, each member of which was entitled to call himself a king and had a right to elect the chief of the state who was called a king Dr V M Apte refers to the occurrence of the terms like Gana, Ganapati etc which in the later

period were distinctly republican terms His view is that it is not impossible that there were even in Vedic period germs of republican states of the type we find in Buddhist times According to Dr H N Sinha, the Vedic Aryans might have been familiar with organised bodies of peoples like Gana The Gana as a corporate body might have originated at this time

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State and Society

The Socıo-cultural development of a people can be understood better wıthın the framework of a polıtıcal system to whıch they belong The state, though prımarıly a polıtıcal organısatıon, occupıes the foremost place among all the assocıatıons and ınstıtutıons of a socıety because ıt wıelds coercıve powers of supervısıon and control over the varıous aspects of socıocultural lıfe It ıs ın thıs context that the study of the nature and character of 'the muslım rule' ın Delhı becomes a prerequısıte to the proper understandıng of the socıety and culture of ıts tımes The sultanate of Delhı was declared 'an ıslamıc, state' by ıts turko-afghan rulers They had brought wıth them as a theocratıc concept of state, accordıng to whıch the head of the state was, also regarded as the relıgıous leader of hıs people—'the mıllat', and was belıeved or presumed to derıve hıs posıtıon and authorıty front God By force of cırcumstances, the Prophet, Muhammad on hıs, *hıjrat* or 'mıgratıon' from Mecca to Medına, was called upon to assume the polıtıcal leadershıp of hıs followers for the protectıon of theır lıves and property He thus laıd the foundatıon of the fırst muslım state ın the world and assumed a double role as founder of Islam as well as temporal head of the faıthful God was saıd to be the true ruler of 'the faıthful' and the Prophet ruled over them on behalf of the Almıghty wıth the object of enforcıng and spreadıng the Quranıc law whıch had been declared as

'a divine revelation' by the Prophet himself Therefore, 'the muslim state, from its very inception, was a theocracy' par excellence The ideas from Greek political philosophy were actually borrowed by the muslim theologians in their attempt to provide 'a legal basis' to and put forward as 'the rational justification' for the institutions adopted or developed by them In the words of Ishwara Topa,

> "The Prophet of Islam founded a theocratic state It was a system of political and social control, based on divine sanctions It reflected the will of God in its movements and activities Its desire was to Islamise life in accordance with the law of God Its dictates were divine laws to be imposed on human beings for their guidance The aim of the Prophet was to organise and discipline people into a nation in which religious diversions, social inequality, political disunity, and economic exploitation should not exist The law of Islam was the law of the Islamic state "

Thus, Islam does not separate religion from politics, in fact, the concept of religion in Islam emerged first, the state was an afterthought The traditional Islamic law does not acknowledge the independent existence of state, nor is state regarded as a primary condition of human society It makes the state completely subservient to the religion of the Prophet According to the Islamic law, the state is only an instrument to serve the creed in the attainment of its objectives or fulfilment of ideals of the muslim brotherhood The Islamic theory of state was, therefore, based on a threefold idea of one scripture, one sovereign and one nation, scripture was the holy Quran, sovereign was the *imam* (leader), also called *khalifa* (the caliph)—political successor to the Prophet, and nation was the *millat*—the muslim brotherhood The basic feature of the state, according to this theory,

was its 'indivisibility' in all the three aspects It coptemplated the establishment of a theocratic star', based on the Islamic law, and recommended only one sovereign, the caliph, to rule over the whole of the muslim world The caliph was styled as the *amir ul momnin*—'the leader of the faithful', his office was thus a political institution based on Islamic injunctions The sovereignty resided in the millat which elected their imam or the caliph, and the latter was under religious obligation to implement the Islamic law on and for the benefit of his muslim, subjects The Islamic government was, therefore, one composed of the muslims, by the muslims and existed for the happiness and welfare of the muslims alone The Islamic theory of state had gradually developed and undergone radical changes long before the establishment of the sultanate of Delhi The monarchical form of government, the basic feature of the sultanate, was itself an extra-Quranic growth which had evolved and entered the fold of Islam on the Persian soil

The sultanate of Delhi was 'an Islamic state' whose monarchs, the dominant nobility and the higher administrative hierarchy belonged to the muslim faith Theorectically, the sultans were expected to enforce the Islamic law (*shairat*) in the land and administer their dominions in a way as to transform the *dar ul harb*—'the land of the infidels', into *dar ul Islam* They professed nominal allegiance to the caliph and felt pride in obtaining investiture from him With the exception of Alauddin Khalji and Mubarak Shah Khalji, all other sultans styled themselves as deputies of the caliph with the titles such as *nasir i amir ul momnin*—assistant of the leader of the faithful', or *yamin ul khalifa*—the right-hand man of the caliph' In actual practice, however, the sultans were sovereign

rulers who did not derive their, powers from, nor depended upon any external force, they were independent rulers of their territorial possessions and did not owe their sovereignty to any worldly power, neither the, caliph nor the *millat* However, being foreign adventurers, who were called upon to rule over vast territories of the country, inhabited primarily by the hindus, they thought it politically expedient to maintain formal contacts with the Islamic world beyond the Khyber so as to produce a psychic of fear among the hindus by alluding to the potential source of their strength Similarly, theoretically speaking, the sovereignty resided in the *millat* which was supposed to elect the sultan but, in actual practice, the millat served as the mainstay of the muslim monarchy, in general The millat could voice its approval or disapproval of the policies and actions of a particular sultan *albeit* it could neither elect a sultan according to the modern democratic norms nor depose an incompetent or unworthy ruler The kingdom of Delhi was carved out and extended by some capable and ambitious military generals by force of arms and they wielded the crown by their ability and military prowess alone Moreover, the overwhelming majority of their raiyyat—the subjects, happened to be non-muslims and the so-called millat constituted but a part of it

According to the traditional Islamic theory of state, usually professed to administer the Islamic law though the political institutions set up by them did not always conform, to the orthodox Islamic principles These were deeply influenced by the Indian traditions and customs and incorporated many elements of the rajput polity with or without modifications Some of the practice and policies of the sultanate were actually opposed to the spirit of the traditional Islamic law

The real strength or weakness of the sultanate depended on the personality and character of the sultan His government was based on highly centralised despotic principles Some of the sultans formally introduced the Islamic law within their dominions, albeit there was no rule of Jaw in the sultanate, the word of the sultan was treated as law Alauddin Khalji, backed by a strong army, could afford to defy the Islamic principles of government and administration, make the *ulama* subservient to him, and declare that he was the state, as did Louis XIV of France, at a later stage

The founding fathers of the sultanate did not belong to any ruling house or families of high social status, they started their careers as slaves, not even as ordinary free citizens Therefore, they did not claim any noble pedigree or hereditary right to hold the crown, even if they did, none took them seriously There was no fixed law of succession to the throne among them Assumption of the crown depended on the dictums 'survival of flit fittest' and 'might is right' No wonder, the sultan occupied the most privileged position in the administrative set up of the sultanate, he was the pivot round which the entire administrative structure of the sultanate revolved The sultan was the chief executive, sole legislator, the fountainhead of justice, and the supreme commander of the armed forces He made appointments to all the top civil and military offices and the entire bureaucracy functioned under his personal direction and control The muslim, jurists assigned ten functions or duties to the sultan in his capacity as the chief executive of an Islamic state These comprised protection of the faith, defence of the muslim territories, protection of the frontiers of the state against foreign aggression, war against the enemies of

Islam, enforcement of the criminal code, and maintenance of law and order, administration of justice, collection of revenues, disbursement of grants and wages to those who deserved an allowance from the public exchequer, appointment of trustworthy and capable counsellors and administrators, and control of the public affairs through personal inspections, and general supervision of the administrative machinery " The sultan forfeited his claim to the throne if he failed to perform these duties deliberately or discharged them wilfully His duties towards the non-muslim subjects were also well-defined by the Islamic law The 'infidels' were not to be treated as full-fledged citizens of the Islamic state, nevertheless, once they acknowledged the suzerainty of the state and agreed to pay jaziya, they acquired the status of *zimmis*, and the sultan wasunder obligation to protect their lives and property and acord them some freedom of worship and social life

The caliph of Baghdad was no more but Balban continued to inscribe his name on the coins so that his co-religionists might extend their unqualified obedience to him as nasir i amir ul momnin 'the right-hand man of the caliph' Balban traced his descent from the mythical turkish hero Afrasiyab and made an oblique attempt to create a halo of superiority round the monarchy His theory of kingship was akin to that of the 'divine rights of kings' as professed by the tudor and stuart monarchs of England Balban was the first Indian muslim ruler to give currency to the epithet zil i Ilahi—'the shadow of God' for himself, it was inscribed on the coins As 'the self-styled viceregent of God on earth', Balban intended to make it known that he was above law as well as the turkish ruling elite who bad brought the sultanate into existence, he ruled by divine sanction and was not answerable to any

worldly authority for the discharge of his powers and function as sovereign He thus attempted to raise the status and prestige of the crown by claiming divine powers for it Obviously, this was a subtle religious device to sanctify the exercise of despotic authority

Barani gives a detailed treatment to the theory of kingship as propounded by Balban himself, no other sultan of Delhi ever laid stress on it in dialogue and court proceedings like Balban, not even Alauddin Khalji, in the later period, who happened to be the most powerful despotic monarch of the Delhi sultanate The funniest part of it was that Balban never felt tired of delivering sermons on this issue to those shamsi nobles with whom he had once shared the power of the state as a slave officer of Altumish By propagating such theories, Balban intended to exact reverence and loyalty from the common man albeit he made himself a subject of ridicule among his ex-colleagues who read in his rhetorics, a blunt warning that they must not consider themselves to be 'kingmakers' any longer, and that they would be dealt with severely if they poked their nose into the affairs of the sultan

In order to establish his claim of divine origin of the sovereign, Balban effected a radical change in his dress, social behaviour and manners He gave up drinking, cut off the jovial company of his courtiers, banned public drinking by the nobility and acquired aloofness from the people He assumed a serious and reserved posture towards all, put on magnificent royal costumes, and was always, accompanied by the imperial paraphernalia Balban always maintained the external dignity, bore frowned looks and displayed an awe-inspiring personality Barani writes that, after his accession to throne, even the domestic servants of Balban never saw him without royal apparel, socks and the head-gear He was a typical oriental despot

who displayed his autocratic powers and the grandeur and prosperity of his relam through his court His courtiers put on prescribed costumes, made of fine silken, woollen and cotton garments, studded with jewels, diamonds and gold ornaments Balban set on a huge throne, bedecked with rich drapery and precious diamonds which dazzled the eyes of the onlookers, behind the sultan stood his guards, tall and muscular turkish slaves, in rich attire and heavily armed, with drawn-out swords Sijda or prostration, and paibos or kissing of the feet of the sultan, were the normal forms of salutation in the court which left the nobility and visitors utterly humbled, terror-stricken and dumbfounded Stem discipline was enforced in the *durbar*, the courtiers and foreign dignitaries occupied their seats in a specified manner, all but two representatives of the caliph" had to keep standing throughout the court proceedings None was permitted to speak without the permission of the sultan, he himself spoke but very little and that only to the highest dignitaries He never laughed nor allowed any courtier to smile in his presence, none dared to interrupt the sultan or defy his orders Balban discriminated between the highborn and the low-born people, the former were further given unequal treatment on racial considerations He never gave high posts to the non-turks or men of doubtful antecedents Noble pedigree became a fad with him Kamal Mahiya, a capable military officer and administrator, was not appointed *iqtadar* of Amroha just because he turned out to be the son, of a hindu convert, even those high officials who had recommended his name for the appointment were reprimanded and punished As a matter of fact, Balban suffered from an inferiority complex which tempted him to assume a haughty and aggressive demeanour against the commoners his prejudicial conduct towards the ruling elite was in no

way conducive to the wellbeing of the Delhi sultante and its grandees

Alauddin Khalji, the greatest of all the sultans of Delhi, went a step further in expounding the theory of divine rights of kingship without any reservations He declared himself the *zil i Ilahi* and claimed divine powers and virtues for the sovereign who, according to him, stood no comparison with the other human beings He believed in the dictum—'kingship knows no kinship' which implied that all the inhabitants of his dominions were either his servants or his subjects, He regarded the king to be above the law of the land rather his word was the law This concept was in contradiction to the principles of Islamic theology on which the turkish state was originally said to have been founded

Alauddin Khalji was a sunni *mussalman* who professed adherence to the faith and never disputed the injunctions of Islamic law, nevertheless as a ruler, he was a law unto himself In his dialogue with qazi Mughisuddin of Bayana on the state policy, Alauddin once expressed his views thus

> "To prevent rebellion, in which thousands perish, I issue such orders as I conceive to be for the good of the state, and the benefit of the people Men are heedless, disrespectful, and disobey my commands, I am then compelled to be severe to bring them into obedience I do not know whether this is lawful or unlawful, whatever I think to be for the good of the state, or suitable for the emergency, that I decree"

Alauddin's, rhetorics on the state policy as given above can be understood better if we substitute the word *him* for 'the state' and *his self-interest* for the good of the state' So far as his position as head of 'an Islamic state' was concerned, Alauddin continued to

style himself *yamin ul kilafat, nasiri amir ul momnin, alebeit* he never felt the necessity of invoking the caliph's name to justify and strengthen his claim to sovereignty He never applied for investiture by the caliph nor regarded the latter to be his political superior, reference to the caliph in official records continued to be made simply to keep the fiction of caliphate theoretically alive

The *ahl e shamshir*—'the nobility', and *ahl e qalam* 'the ulama', wielded influence in the state affairs, and exercised, some check on the powers and functions of the mamluk[1] sultans of Delhi, Alauddin Khalji sternly curbed their power and did not give them a free hand in determining the state policy He was a highly self-willed and autocratic ruler who struck terror in the hearts of his ministers, military generals and the ruling elite, therefore, none dared to give him any advice or contradict his views or orders The nobles were kept firmly under his thumb by the sultan while the ulama, though kept in good humour, were never permitted to interfere in state politics Of course, Alauddin did not antagonise the mullas and sheikhs through public criticism or ridicule The muslim scholars, saints, sheikhs, and the mullas received liberal stipends (*madad i muash*) and honours All posts in the judicial and educational establishments were reserved for them, their chiefs were given a free hand in administering the educational institutions, courts, holy places, religious endowments and charitable funds They also enjoyed sufficient freedom of action in tackling the socio-religious problems of the muslim community At times, Alauddin successfully exploited muslim fanaticism in his wars against the hindu chieftains and treatment of the *zimmis* Nevertheless, Alauddin Khalji was the first among the turkish sultans of Delhi to separate religion

from the state politics, he initiated what may be called a secular state policy based on the principles of absolute despotism Barani has to say that Alauddin Khalji

> "came to the conclusion that polity and government are one thing, and the rules and decrees of (Islamic) Law are another Royal commands belong to the king, legal decrees rest upon the judgment of qazis and muftis In accordance with this opinion, whatever affair of state came before him, he only looked to the public good, without considering whether his mode of dealing with it was lawful or unlawful He never asked for legal opinions about political matters, and, very few learned men visited him "

Alauddin's long reign of twenty years provides us with only two instances when he had some discussion, at his own initiative, with two experts on Islamic theology, Alaul Mulk, the kotwal of Delhi—and personal friend of the sultan, and Mughisuddin, the qazi of Bayana and one of the greatest theologians of his age Of course, Alauddin did not annoy the ulama by challenging their right to have a say in the state affairs but subordinated them through liberal state patronage and tactfulness which, coupled with his the exercise of autocratic authority, in general, cowed them down to abject obedience

Mughisuddin was treated as one of the ordinary amirs at the court and never accorded any special treatment by virtue of his being an expert in Islamic law One day 'when efforts were being made for the increase' of taxes on the subjects, Alauddin told Mughisuddin that he 'had several questions to ask him, and desired him to speak the plain truth ' It shook the qazi to the bones and he replied

> "The angel of my destiny (death) seems to be close at hand, since your majesty wishes to question me on matters of religion, if I speak the truth, you will be angry and kill me"

The sultan promised to spare his life but 'commanded him to answer in accordance with what he had read in books (Islamic law)' The qazi began to quote at length the Islamic scriptures in reply to one of the queries pertaining to the treatment of hindus in 'an Islamic state', Alauddin 'smiled' at his answers and said,

> "I do not understand any of the statements thou hast made,—I have taken my measures, and have made my subjects obedient, so that at my command they are ready to creep into holes like mice

It clearly shows that Alauddin Khalji was an autocrat whose word was law, and whose theory of kingship had nothing to do with the traditional Islamic principles

Mubarak Shah Khalji, the son and successor of Alauddin Khaljji, subscribed to the concept of sovereignty as envisaged by his illustrious father, albeit his untimely violent death brought the experiment to a sudden end The successive sultans of Delhi, with the exception of Muhammad bin Tughluq, failed to pursue this concept of kingship and the sultanate reverted to a theocracy once again Firoze Tughluq revived contacts with the caliph by seeking an investiture from him and assumed the title of *naib i amir ul momnin*, he read the *khutba* and struck coins in the name of the caliph Firoze Tughlaq was an orthodox *sunni mussalman* who resorted to religious bigotry as a matter of state policy, albeit, by virtue of his gentle and human nature, he could not afford to be cruel and inhuman towards the nonmuslims in actual

practice He suffered from an inferiority complex that he had been born of a Hindu mother, therefore, in order to establish his credibility as the sovereign of 'an Islamic state' and leader of the faithful", he publicly demonstrated contempt for Hinduism and displayed extraordinary zeal for Islam He was equally intolerant of the shias and other Muslim dissenters He always attempted to win the goodwill and support of the ulama and extended the influence of theologians in the state affairs

The Islamic theory of state did not permit the existence of any religion other than Islam, none but the muslims were considered to be the rightful citizens of 'an Islamic state' Nevertheless, the existence of some non-muslims, who refused to embrace Islam, had 'to be tolerated within' the territorial jurisdictions of an Islamic state from its very inception under the leadership of Prophet himself The 'nonbelievers' were divided into two broad categories—ahl e kitab or 'those who possessed some sort of revealed scripture' and kafirs—'the infidels' The jews and Christian inhabitants of Medina were recognised by the Prophet as *ahl e kitab* and granted protection and partial religious toleration in return for the receipt of jaziya'—the poll tax' from them The term *Jaziya*, which is derived from *jaza*, means 'compensation of requittal from good or evil', the Quran says

> "Fight ye those who believe not in Allah, nor in the Final Day,
>
> Who do not make taboo that which has been made taboo by Allah and His Apostle,
>
> Who follow not the teachings true among the Peoples of the Book,
>
> Until they willingly offer *jaziya* and are quite subdued "

Accordingly, *jaziya* was originally levied upon non-muslims as a sign of humiliation, and compensation for security of life and property in a Muslim state' and also as 'compensation for military service' from which they, being unbelievers', were exempt Those who paid the *jaziya* were called *zimmis* or 'the people under contract of protection by the Islamic state ' To begin with, only Jews and Christians, were given the status of zimmis but, at a later stage, the zoroastrians, who were declared to be *musahab ahl e kitab* or 'those who resembled the possessors of revealed scriptures' were also included in this category All the rest of the non-muslims, commonly styled as kafirs and mushriks—infidels' or 'idolators', were denied the right of existence in a truly Islamic state They were dubbed eternal enemies of Islam and condemned as kable e gardan zadni or 'those who were fit to be beheaded or extirpated', they were confronted with either of the two alternatives—Islam or Death'

It is now a part of history that, during the very lifetime of the Prophet, the jews and Christians of Medina, who had, in all humility accepted their inferior status as *zimmis* and begun to pay *jaziya* to 'the first Muslim state", proved irksome to the 'true believers' and the Prophet was constrained to turn them out of Medina Umar I, the most famous or the Pious Caliphs, following in the footprints of the Prophet, expelled the jews and Christians from the whole of Arabia, thus converting the homeland of the arabs into a true dar ul Islam The Prophet and the Pious Caliphs had thereby set the example of religious intolerance towards their non-muslim subjects, which was treated as an ideal by the orthodox muslim rulers

Muhammad bin Qasim, who laid the foundation of the muslim rule in Sind and Multan, secured the status of zimmis for his hindu subjects from the caliph

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the Islamic state as zimmis That explains the intense hatred of the non-muslims by the orthodox muslim fanatics, in general, whenever a muslim ruler fell under the spell of such orthodox *ulama*, he adopted the policy or religious intolerance and 'persecution of his hindu subjects It created a permanent gulf between the hindus and muslims which could not be bridged effectively for a long time According to an observation, 'the political and religious condition under which the hindus were forced to live in a muslim state raised a great barrier between the two communities The political supremacy of muslims was absolute, the hindus not only enjoyed no political status in practice, but could not even aspire to it under Islamic theory While living in their own country and in possession of their own hearths and homes, the hindus were reduced to the status of inferior citizens of 'an Islamic state' as the sultanate of Delhi was usually styled On the other hand, the muslims, though in microscopic minority, constituted the privileged or the most favoured children of the state who enjoyed the bounties and benefited from all the public welfare and other state enterprises

Major part of India remained beyond the reach of the sultanate of Delhi in the thirteenth century Big chunks of the country were outside the pale of the turkish rule even during the heyday of the sultanate under Alauddin Khalji and Muhammad bin had transformed it into an empire In the course of its rapid disintegration, the sultanate gave birth to a number of powerful states and feudal chieftainships These comprised, among others, the Bahmani and Vijayanagar empire the well-established and prosperous provincial muslim states of Malwa, Gujarat, Jaunpur and Bengal, and powerful rajput states of Mewar and Marwar In between them were

interspersed hundreds of small states, semi-independent feudatory/principalities and petty estates of the tribal chiefs The Bahmani empire and other muslim kingdoms of Malwa, Gujarat and Bengal, etc, which emerged on the ruins of the sultanate of Delhi, contributed very little to the theory and practice of the statecraft, they continued to function more or lea on the pattern of the sultanate The rajput principalities and other hindu states were based on the concept of monarchy as derived from the common source of the dharmashastras, their nature was more or less akin to that of the Viajayanagar empire which flourished in the south for about two centuries and set the standards for the hindu polity of the times

Vijayanagar was a hindu theocratic state in which dharma was practised and encouraged and nothing against it was allowed The state did not assume an attitude of neutrality in religious affairs A Vijayanagar emperor popularised the concept of the divine rights of kingship Like the sultan of Delhi, he was also a despotic ruler although the injunctions of the dharma and the local customs and traditions of the people served as 'checks upon the arbitrary exercise of his powers,' -Nevertheless, there was no way of stopping his tyranny if he chose to be oppressive, or challenging his will except by rising in rebellion which hardly claimed any popular supports K S Lal draws an interesting comparison between the sultanate of Delhi and the empire of Vijayanagar to highlight the nature and character of their rule, according to him, both were police states, governed by autocratic rulers who professed to rule by the injunctions of their respective religions, if the sultanate was said to have been based on the shariat, Vijayanagar drew its inspiration and guidance from the dharma The political aims of the rulers were also the same to carry

on digvijaya or military conquests in all directions, 'a weak neighbour was the surest victim and any pretext was good enough to attack him Rulers of both the states conducted the government with the assistance of their ministers and counsellors who were mostly drawn from the theologians or champions of their respective religions the ulama in Delhi and the brahmins in Vijayanagar Both the states had their religious endowment departments, managed exclusively by the leaders of the respective priestly class, 'which had a big say and much influence' in both the states The Vijayanagar emperors were staunch hindus albeit they pursued a policy of religious toleration towards all of their subjects, including the muslims K S Lal observes that 'besides continuing the policy of toleration of South Indian rulers from the early times, there were many other reasons for this attitude and policy In the first place, Hindu Dharma is not a proselytising religion People are not even encouraged to embrace it, not to speak of being forced to do so Therefore, it could not be a part or the state's duty to campaign for conversions or to give inducements or put economic pressure to obtain converts to Hinduism In the second place, the dharmashastras do not Jay down any specific laws prejudicial to the non-hindus It is because of this that so many faiths and sects could flourish side by side in India, and so many philosophers could freely think, write and preach and so many schools of art could grow and develop' Besides, economic considerations also weighed heavily with the rulers of Vijayanagar in the pursuit of their policy of religious toleration towards the non-hindus Theirs was a maritime empire, 'any religious intolerance would have discouraged foreign merchants from visiting the empire's ports Such a situation would have sapped the very foundations of its prosperity, because it gained

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Akbar thus received in heritage an Islamic polity which revolved round the personality of an absolute monarch as the *amir ul momnin*, it retained all the essential features of the traditional Islamic theory of state Akbar, therefore, recognised, during the early years of his reign, the supremacy of the Islamic law as an instrument of state policy, and received homage from the mughal nobility and the ulama as 'defender of faith' and commander of the faithful' who was supposed to act as the *khadim i millet*—servant of the muslim brotherhood' in the discharge of his functions as their leader In other words, the muslim theologians and divines called the ulama, who represented the public opinion of the millat or, the muslim brotherhood', expected to be treated as guides and counsellors by the king in the formulation of the state policy Of course, they did hold high offices and exercised great influence over the state affairs in the beginning of Akbar's reign He gradually liberated himself from the influence of the orthodox sunni ulama, the promulgation of the mahzar or the infallibility decree' so-called in September 1579 sounded the death-knell of their influence in the state affairs Thereafter, Akbar boldly asserted his claim to be the impartial ruler of all his subjects, majority of whom happened to be hindus All the socio-religious disabilities, from which the hindus had suffered in the past, were done away with They were accorded freedom of worship and granted equal rights of citizenship with their muslim fellow brethren The doors of civil and military services were thrown open to them so that they could identify their interests with those of the mughal state All these measures cut at the very roots of the traditional Islamic theory of state After about two decades of continuous experimentation and adaptation, Akbar, ultimately, matured a new concept of kingship which may be called Akbar's

theory of state It was based upon three fundamental principles—(a) absolute monarchy based on the theory of divine rights of kingship, (b) the concept of a secular nation-state of India, which stood essentially for (c) public welfare Abul Fazl elaborates these principles in his own style at many places in the Akbarnama, including the *Ain i Akbari* About the divine origin of Akbar's monarchy, he observes

> "Kingship is a gift of God and is not bestowed till many thousand grand requisites have been gathered in an individual Race and wealth and the assembling of a mob are not enough for this great position "

Abul Fazl attributes superhuman powers to the monarch with the remarks that no dignity is higher in the eyes of God than royalty' Elsewhere he writes that the very sight of kings has been held to be a part of divine worship They have been styled conventionally as the *zil i Ilahi*, and indeed to behold them is a means of calling to mind the Creator'

Exactly in the spirit of this statement, Akbar bad actually assumed the title of *zil i Ilahi* Abul Fazl further elaborates this, principle in the following words

> "Royalty is a light emanating from God, and a ray from the sun, the illuminator of the universe, the argument of the book of perfection, the receptacle of all virtues Modern language calls this light farr i izidi—'the divine light', and the tongue of antiquity called it kujan khura—the sublime halo' It is communicated by God to kings without the intermediate assistance of any one, and men, in the presence of it, bend the forehead of praise towards the ground of submission "

As a matter of fact, Akbar, through the agency of his lieutenants like Abul Fazl and others, attempted to

popularise the ideas that his ruling family bad descended from the sun through their celebrated female progenitor, Alanquawa The worship of the sun had been introduced as one of the rituals in the imperial court by him There was nothing surprising about it because the Indians were already familiar with their ancient kshatriya families of surytivanshis and chandravanshis who claimed their descent from the sun and the moon respectively Akbar had thus thoroughly Indianised his concept of absolute monarchy to win support from his hindu subjects

The other two principles of Akbar's theory of state, viz, the concepts of a secular nation-state and public welfare were, likewise, the outcome of an evolutionary process based upon his experiences as ruler and experimentation in the arts of diplomacy and statecraft Akbar was a born soldier and imperialist by instinct His initial impulse after assuming the reins of government in his hands as sovereign ruler was to extend the boundaries of his 'kingdom and attain ascendancy over the neighbouring rulers of India, war-preparedness was a must not only for a career of conquest but also for his very existence as independent ruler His initial victories against his immediate neighbouring chiefs and successful suppression of revolts of the disaffected nobles and kinsmen gave him a degree of confidence needed for arousing the imperial instincts in him The programme of random conquests launched by him during the first few years gradually assumed a form and methodology He evolved a systematic plan for the expansion of his dominions This plan received a fillip from his successful dealings with the rajputs, both as friends as well as foes The adoption of a specific rajput policy by Akbar and his liberal religious outlook, resulting in the emancipation of his hindu subjects, were the two pillars upon which

the grand edifice of his imperialist policy was laid These two factors nurtured his imperialist instincts and provided a political philosophy to his military campaigns Akbar now evolved an ambitious plan for the conquest of the Indian subcontinent with the object of establishing an all-powerfull imperial or central government under the mughal ruling house The political unification of the country and the establishment of a strong central government with a uniform system of administration throughout the land became the ideals of his life During the second half of his reign, it was not his land-hunger or the thrill of exploits which prompted his military actions, instead, he was guided by the political ideal to establish himself as the lord paramount of the whole of the country and earn reputation as the national monarch of all of its people Though foreigner in blood, Akbar was every inch an Indian who, like the ancient chakravartin rulers of India, had developed a firm faith in the principle of one country, one government and one people He stood for the political unification of the country and the national integrity of its people Regionalism, racialism or religious considerations were totally superseded by the national sentiments in his scheme of conquests Akbar spent the whole of his life in the fulfilment of this objective To the good fortune of the Indians, he achieved a substantial measure of success in his efforts Akbar granted complete religious freedom to his subjects, threw open the gates of imperial services to all without discrimination, and utilised the resources of the state for the welfare and happiness of his people According to an opinion, Akbar was so great because he was so thoroughly Indianised His genius perceived the possibilities, and his courage undertook the task of welding the two communities hind us and muslims, into a common nation by the universal bond of common imperial

service and equal citizenship of a magnificent empire Akbar identified himself completely with the land and its people and did his best to impart political and sociocultural unity to the national state of India His theory of state was revolutionary in its contents and scope, it stood for a secular state as opposed to 'the Islamic state' of the muslim conception It found favour with his hindu subjects and was accepted, though grudgingly, by majority of his muslim subjects For Akbar it was not a textbook maxim, he took it rather seriously and strove his best to live upto it

Akbar's concept of a secular nation-state and the lofty ideals of public were pursued by his successors Jahangir and Shah Jahan with unabated zeal, with the result that the mughal empire flourished and its people made strides in ail walks of life for over a century To the misfortune of the Indians, Aurangzeb proved a misfit in this newly emerging framework of a secular of nation-state, he revived the Islamic theory of state and recklessly reversed the wheel of national progress Aurangzeb had been brought up under the influence of orthodox *sunni mullas* who acted as his principal guides all through his life, His accession to the throne, therefore led to the revival of the influence of the orthodox mallas in the state politics Aurangzeb sincerely believed in the Islamic theory of state He regarded the mughal empire to be an Islamic state and, as such, strove his best to act as an Ideal muslim ruler It was his keen desire to convert the *dar ul harb* of India into *dar ul Islam* He looked upon the nonmuslims as kafirs the infidels', and had no soft corner for the shias and stijis who, according to him, were not true mussalmans In fact, Aurangzeb was an antithesis of Akbar in thought, word and deed, The reversal of Akbar's concept of a secular national state for India by Aurangzeb took place in stages the

detailed narration of which has been given at an appropriate place in this study His concept of public welfare was confined to the happiness and welfare of the orthodox muslims alone He discriminated between his subjects on religious considerations, deprived the hindus of their civil liberties, reimposed Jaziya on them, and did his utmost to harm their economic interests According to an opinion,

> "Aurangzeb possessed neither the genius of Akbar nor the wisdom of Jahangir and Shah Jahan, who had by judicious government, made of the house of Timur a truly Indian dynasty which moghul and hindu alike were proud to serve His insane lapse into the policy of the early turki and pathan conquerers struck at the very heart of the great national edifice which had been called into being with so much circumspection by his predecessors "

As a result of Aurangzeb's reactionary state policy, the sociocultural progress of the country came to a grinding halt The vastness of the empire coupled with the despotic rule of the mughals were the two potent factors which bespoke of its, ultimate decline albeit Aurangzeb added to them a much more powerful element of religious bigotry which brought about the fall of the mighty mughal empire much earlier than expected It became known to the world in November 1675 that Aurangzeb was not the just and impartial ruler of all the Indians when he ordered the execution of a saint, Guru Teg Bahadur, and his innocent associates on their refusal to embrace Islam The climax was reached in April 1679 when he deprived all the hindus of their rights of citizenship by the imposition of jaziya Aurangzeb lost the mandate to rule India when he ordered 'a vast multitude' of the unarmed, poor and destitute hindus of Delhi, seeking the abolition of Jaziya and pleading for mercy, to be

trampled under feet of the elephants When Aurangzeb himself declared jehad—'holy war' upon the hindus, the latter had no other alternative but to take up to arms if they did not want to change their religion The first signs of cracks in the imperial structure appeared in 1679-80 when the rajputs of Jodhpur took up arms under the leadership of Durga Dass Rathor and started a war of independence They were soon joined in the struggle by the sisodias of Mewar Their temporary suppression by the imperial troops, instead or dampening the spirit of the rajputs, set the whole of Rajasthan ablaze, So much so that prince Akbar, who was sent by Aurangzeb to crush the rajputs, himself felt disgusted with the antinational and suicidal policies of his father, and raised a standard of revolt in a bid to put the empire on the right track again His failure marked the defeat of the forces of nationalism, liberalism and secular state policy at the hands of religious bigots and reactionary elements who had come to dominate the imperial court under Aurangzeb The second major crack in the grand edifice of the Indian nation-state occurred in 1689 when Aurangzeb, by his inhuman and cruel treatment of Sambhaji, the son and successor of Shivaji, incurred the deep resentment of the marathas as a whole and turned them into the sworn enemies of the mughals The people's war of independence that engulfed Maharashtra struck a serious blow to the solidarity and integrity of the mughal empire The Deccan war proved very expensive and wasteful Millions of people perished in the war-affected regions, according to an estimate, the loss of life in the imperial camp in the Deccan alone was about one lakh of men and three lakhs of animals, including horses, elephants, oxen and camels per year The peasantry, which constituted the backbone of the country, was ruined The village-folk 'suffered not only from violent capture, forced labour

and starvation but also from epidmics, which broke out frequently in various parts of India in the last quarter of the seventeenth century The incessant warfare emptied the state treasury, when the current revenues of the empire failed to meet the recurring expenditure on the war-front, Aurangzeb 'ordered the accumulated treasures of his ancestors from Akbar downwards to be taken out of the vaults of Agra and Delhi forts and sent to him in the Deccan

Thus the last reserves of the empire were exhausted and once the richest state of the world actually ran bankrupt by the time of Aurangzeb's death It left the provincial governments too poor to repair the public buildings, sarais, and roads, worn out and Tendered unusable

The educational institutions, irrigation works and other public utility services broke down for want of funds The absence of Aurangzeb from the imperial capital for quarter of a century put the entire state machinery out of gear

The provincial governors became indolent and the bureaucracy tended to become more corrupt and oppressive than ever before The honest and faithful governors emptied provincial treasuries to meet the imperial demands while the clever and ambitious ones secretly amassed wealth and strengthened their hold over the territories under their control so as to assert their independence at an appropriate occasion In most of the provinces, law and order deteriorated, antisocial elements raised their ugly heads and created anarchy Political unrest and insecurity of roads adversely affected trade and commerce , as a result, no relief, either from state or from private sources, was possible to save the lives of the starving populace in the famine—bit areas Thus the economic bankruptcy of

the mughal empire and breakdown of its administration, coupled with the discontent of majority of its subjects rendered the grand edifice of the nation-state hollow from within, its foundations were eaten away by the ficus religiosa Under the circumstances, the sociocultural advancement of the country came to a standstill

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Pre-Muslim Indian Society

We take the eleventh century to be the beginning of medieval age in India It lands us into the so-called *rajput period* of ancient Indian civilisation The Indian society since the death of Harsha Vardbana to the muslim conquest of northern India has often been styled the rajput civilisation which is a misnomer As a matter of fact, the rajputs constituted but a fraction of the Indian society They cultivated and preserved some excellent sociocultural traits of the remote past and contributed what may be called the rajput culture to the ancient Indian civilisation, albeit the social virtues attributed to the rajputs were not universal In the humble opinion of the author, these virtues were confined mostly to the ruling elite and upper strata of the society Had the rajput chieftains and the sociopolitical and religious leadership of the country inspired respect and confidence among the masses, and the latter identified their interests with those of the feudal rajput states, the Indian society would not have collapsed like a house of cards in the face of foreign aggression It could have reorganised itself and thrown up even better leadership to safeguard the national independence It is, however, a part of history that the Indians, as a whole, put up a very poor show at the time of national catastrophe and failed to act as a well-knit, self-disciplined and mature society because of inherent defects in its sociopolitical organisation and internal weaknesses which had sapped its vitality and

made it hollow from within The apparent social stability and outward magnificence of the pre-muslim Indian society was simply deceptive

Rajput culture

This is not the place to discuss the various theories about the origin of the rajputs The historians hold different views regarding their origin, one thing is, however, certain that they were of mixed origin A number of rajput clans claimed their descent from kshatriyas, in some cases their claim was valid, the kshatriyas of ancient times could not have disappeared from the Indian political and social scene all at once or even gradually Some of the rajputs had sprung up from the aboriginal tribes and other castes of hindus, including the brahmanas, vaishyas and even the low-castes, whereas, quite a few of them were foreign immigrants, admitted into the fold of hindu society through Indianisation formal conversion and purification as, for example, the four clans of agnikula rajputs—parmaras, pratiharas, chauhans and chalukyas There bad been 'kshatriya" tribes in Rajasthan before 750 A D , the chavadas, the mauryas and others' However, they were gradually superseded by the emergence of new rajput clans of the Indianised foreigners who took up arms to defend their country of domicile against the fresh onslaughts on its borders by the ghazis of Islam According to an opinion, 'the great event that brought about this change, pushing older kshatriya clans into the background' and putting the so-called agnikula rajputs 'into the forefront of a cultural and political battle, was the invasion of the country by the arabs After the conquest of Sind and Multan in 712-13, the arabs made desperate attempts to reach the interior of the country, it were these Indianised foreigners the agnikula rajputs, who repulsed the repeated attacks on Gujarat, Malwa and

Rajasthan, and safeguarded Indian culture and freedom for a long time As suggested elsewhere in this study, the feudal lords and the ruling elite of the rajput period, though usually referred to as the rajputs by the subsequent writers, belonged actually to many an Indian race, caste, community or tribe, As a matter of fact, each of the feudal states, comprising the whole of its populace, was usually identified with its ruling clan, tribe or community which provided political-cum-military 'leadership and whose sole responsibility it was to safeguard the independence or the very existence of the feudal state With the fall of a ruling house or the disintegration of a feudal state or principality, its erstwhile subjects, particularly the masses or sons of the soil, did not disappear Most of them remained where they ever had been in their own ancestral hearth, and homes, in the same old villages, and they were very much attached to their agricultural lands It made no difference to them whether the parmaras ruled at Delhi or the chauhans took over the reins of the government

The rajput society proper was feudal in its organisational set up It was split up into various clans each under one or more hereditary ruling houses, over forty such clans, who acquired political ascendancy during that period, have drawn the treatment of the historians so far All land was supposed to belong to the ruling chief, who parcelled it out among his lieutenants, usually styled as thakurs The latter paid a fixed revenue or tribute and rendered military service (olaga or chakari) to the king in return for the lands granted to them The village communities were governed by their panchayats and enjoyed considerable autonomy in their internal affairs the villages constituted the self-contained, self-dependent and self-sufficient units of the Indian social order

There was no written law of the land, the rajput states were run on local customs and traditions The feudal administrative set up was usually not very elaborate, in most cases, it was not efficient or stable either

Virtues of Rajput Character

The rajputs were known for their undaunted courage and chivalry They were honest, generous and hospitable, and kept their word They were simple, outspoken and straightforward people who rejected outright the Machiavellian principles of deceit and treachery in war They were sometimes generous to a fault in their treatment of the vanquished foe The rajputs were freedom loving people with a keen sense of honour and self-respect They constituted, in fact, the sword-arm of Hindustan They were great warriors who took to fighting as a sport and smilingly laid down their lives for the honour of their families, clan or the regional leader The negative aspect of their excessively martial character has already been referred to in the introductory note to this study

The rajput women enjoyed considerable freedom and respect in the society They were known for their chastity and devotion to their husbands There was no purdah system among them They had some freedom in the selection of their husbands too, swayamvar was in vogue among the females of the ruling elite for this purpose The custom of sati was prevalent though not insisted upon Some of the rajput ladies were educated, and they took active part in public life They did not lag behind their menfolk in bravery and heroism Many of them participated in warfare and fought the enemy shoulder to shoulder with their menfolk In time of danger, they displayed courage and fortitude which stands unparalleled in the history of the world

When their warriors were defeated or killed, the rajput ladies sacrificed their lives by burning themselves alive or committing suicides en-mass in manifold ways in order to safeguard their honour and self-respect, it was called the rite of jauhar

Composition of the Hindu Society

The term hindu was used vaguely by the muslim, immigrants with reference to all the inhabitants of India to which the epithet kafir (pagan or nonbeliever) was added for the purpose of their distinction from the muslims or the true-believers, hence the phrase hindu civilisation and culture is synonymous with Indian Civilisation and Culture of the pre-muslim age for all intents and purposes The hindus had developed a very complex social structure by the beginning of the eleventh century They were a caste-ridden society The four traditional castes, the chatur varnas, originally based on occupations, had become hereditary since the dawn of the Christian era These had multiplied like hydraheads into numerous subcastes and social groups, each standing in isolation from the rest of the society Toynbee refers to their caste system as a social enormity' which had disrupted its social unity The various castes and subcastes were divided into watertight compartments, they did not intermarry nor share food with one another People belonging to the same caste or subcaste but living in different parts of the country gradually developed different social customs and manners, and ultimately, stopped intermarrying or dining together Similarly, people belonging to the high castes suffered from superiority complex, they looked down upon the low-castes and exercised discrimination against them The multitude of the hindus, therefore, did not add to their social strength because they stood like a house divided against itself The caste system in the words of

R C Dutt, 'which unduly exalted the powers and privileges of priests, had the inevitable result degrading all honest trades and industries other than that of priests ,, it served to divide the nation and create mutual ill-feeling, it degraded the nation in order to exalt the priests The brahmans maintained their superiority over all other castes as ever before The priestly class among them controlled the social fire of the people, the multifarious social ceremonies and rituals through which a hindu had to pass from his birth till death, rather after his death too, had reduced him to the position of a captive in the grip of the priests The brahmans claimed to be the champions of the entire intellectual and spiritual heritage of the land They concentrated their attention on religion and spiritualism and did not show much interest in scientific studies nor guided the nation in the matter of industrial and technological advancement The ancient kshatriyas had assumed the title of rajputs while most of the ancient vaishyas had given up agriculture and taken to trade and commerce Alberuni observes that vaishyas—the great body of the Aryan people', were also 'fast degenerating to the rank of sudras ' At one place in his narrative we are told that is not very great distance between the vaishyas and the sudras, elsewhere we are informed that the vaishyas had already been deprived of their ancient heritage of religious education, that the brahmans taught Vedas to the kshatriyas albeit 'the vaishya and sudra are not allowed to hear it' At yet another place, Alberuni remarks that 'every action which is considered as the privilege of the brahman, such as saving prayers, the recitation of the Veda, and offering sacrifices to the fire, is forbidden to him, to such a degree that when a sudra or a vaishya is proved to have recited the Veda, he is accused by the brahmans

before the ruler, and the latter will order his tongue to be cut off

The sudras continued to render menial services to the higher castes though many of them had adopted agricultural tenancy and artisans craft The untouchables lived outside the towns and the villages Most of the people were poor, backward and ignorant of education and learning, they constituted the masses Having been neglected by the higher castes since ages, they felt demoralised and dejected They suffered from many social and economic disabilities which made their lives miserable When the ex-buddhists reverted back to the fold of Hinduism, they became the unprivileged masses for whom separate sub-castes of the lower order came into being The upper classes made' their caste structure more rigid so as to prevent their entry into the higher social structure Even the artisans' professions came to be treated as separate sub-castes of lower denominations, like the weavers ironsmiths and, oil-men, etc All said and written about the glorious civilisation, and culture of per-muslim India, a nation which downgraded the peasants and producers of national wealth, humiliated and exploited its own working people, and looked down upon the hands who fed it, could no longer boast of its greatness whatever its accomplishments in the fields of religion and philosophy, sciences and arts, education and literature, and the much-publicised ethics and refined cultural values It was doomed to go down in history sooner or later as a degenerate social order and there was nothing surprising that it was knocked down and levelled to the ground by the rising tide of Islam The rigidity of the caste system made it difficult for an outsider to be absorbed in the hindu society whose growth came practically to a standstill The ruling elite and orthodox brahmans shut 'themselves

into the ivory towers of caste system and were cut off from the mainstream of the society or the masses They failed to provide political, social or true spiritual guidance to the latter Accordingly, the masses lost interest in the dynamic feuds or rise and fill of the rajput states No wonder, more than half of the hindu populace stood forth as mere spectators when the rajput rulers had to fight a life and death struggle against the turkish invaders Their social vision had become so narrow that they did not consider themselves responsible for the defence of their own hearths and homes

As mentioned earlier, the ladies of the ruling elite, particularly the rajputs, enjoyed social freedom but this was not the case with the common womenfolk, their condition was not satisfactory They were mostly confined to the four walls of houses and depended almost exclusively on their male earning members The evils of child marriage and infanticide were prevalent Polygamy was recognised though it was confined to the upper classes because of economic considerations Widow re-marriage was not encouraged which made their lives miserable and added to the burden of the society in general Alberuni records

"Hindus marry at a very young age if a wife loses husband by death, she cannot marry another man She has only to choose between two things either to remain a widow as long as she lives, or to burn herself, and the latter eventually is considered the preferable, because, as a widow, she is ill-treated as long as she lives "

Hinduism, was the predominant religion in one or the other of its forms, of the pre-muslim Indian society There was a sprinkling of the parsees along the western coast who, though 'a people apart, lived in

perfect harmony with their hindu neighbours Buddhism was at a discount with the rajputs, the Buddhist masses in northern and central India were gradually being assimilated within the fold of hindu society Nevertheless, the population of Bihar and Bengal was found to be predominantly buddhist even in the beginning of the thirteenth century when the turks penetrated therein The rajputs were devout hindus, they worshipped various mythical gods and goddesses, particularly, Vishnu, Siva and Durga or Sakti Alberuni writes in detail about the religious beliefs and practices of the hindus He refers to the multitude of gods and goddesses whom they worshipped, nevertheless, he does not find difficulty in making out the three principal deities of the hindus—Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver, and Siva or Mahesa the Destroyer, who collectively formed a Unity or the Trinity He says that in this respect, there is an analogy between hindus and Christians, as the latter distinguish between the three persons, and give them three separate names—Father, Son and Holy Ghost, but unite them into one substances That Alberuni had carefully studied the hindu scriptures and understood correctly their religious philosophy and institutions is demonstrated by him in his references to the doctrine of monotheism as given by the Upanishads He informs us that 'the multitude of gods is for vulgar belief, the educated hindus believe God to be one, eternal, without beginning and end, acting by free will, almighty, all wise living, giving life, ruling, and preserving The existence of God, they (hindus) consider as real existence, because everything that exists, exists through Him Alberuni had also learnt all about the hindu concept of 'transmigration of soul', of 'every act in life, bringing its reward or punishment in the life to come', and of final emancipation derived by true knowledge', he observes that, after the attainment

of true knowledge, the soul turns away from matter, the connecting links are broken, the union is dissolved Separation and dissolution take place, and the soul returns to its home, carrying with itself as much of the bliss of knowledge as sesame develops grains and blossoms afterwards never separating from its oil The intelligent being, intelligence, and its object are united and become one

The religious beliefs and practices of the hindus and buddhists showed a marked degeneration The priestly class among the brahmans exploited the people in the name of religion, devadasi system in the temples was fraught with manifold social evils The tantric philosophy of mysticism which had found its entry in the hindu and buddhist theology as far back as the sixth century, had started showing its ugly results It encouraged all sorts of superstitions and blind practices through which the crooks, in the garb of spiritual guides, robbed the poor and ignorant masses The exponents of vammarga dharma indulged in 'wine, flesh and women' The vicious ideas of this cult had permeated the educational institutions too, they produced abscure literature on prostitutes and pimps which, instead of generating the reformative forces, justified and encouraged evil practices among the educated Guhya samaja regarded as an important work on the buddhist tantrics, refers to Mahatma Buddha as 'indulging in acts of debauchery with the angels' The famous yoga system of philosophy had degenerated into various strange practices by which supernatural powers, it was believed, could he obtained' A branch of literature known as the tantras 'the creations of the last period or hindu degeneracy' gives us the obnoxious 'accounts of dark, cruel, and obscene practices for the acquisition of supernatural powers' In his observations on the tantric literature, R C Dutt remarks

> "ignorance is credulous, and feebleness bankers after power And when a superstitious ignorance and a senile feebleness had reached their last stage of degeneracy, men sought by unwholesome practices and unholy rites to acquire that power which providence has rendered attainable only by a fire and healthy exercise of our faculties moral, intellectual, and physical To the historian, the tantra literature represents, not a special phase of hindu thought, but a diseased form of the human mind, which is possible only when the life has departed, when all political cousciousness has vanished and the lamp of knowledge is extinct

Indian art and architecture was also adversely affected by the religious and moral degeneration of the sociopolitical leadership The cult of bhakti, born in the south in the eighth century, had made its appearance in the north but it bad not yet shown results in curing the socio-religious ills of the country

Development of Hindu Sciences

Alberuni tells us about the rich scientific knowledge and literature possessed by the hindus of his age, He makes a special mention of the physical sciences, including biology, physics, astronomy and medicine, which were in a fairly advanced stage of development On the basis of intensive research in the sociocultural condition of India on the eve of the turkish invasions, Mohammad Habib observes

> "Though the India of the eleventh century had fallen far from the cultural standards of the era of Harsha, not to mention the Golden Age of the Guptas, it may be safely affirmed that no single country, even in that age, with the possible exception of Persia, could boast of a finer culture But while in Persia, the culture of the Achaemenian and the Sassanian periods had entirely perished, India had, inspite of foreign

> invasions and internal wars, preserved the continuity of her traditions The researches of Alberuni prove beyond doubt that hindu philosophy and science, though not so progressive as in the preceding centuries, were living and vital Even a solitary scholar, like Alberuni, could collect the material necessary for reconstructing the metaphysical and scientific achievements of the past

Alberuni brings home to us that 'the number of hindu sciences is great but the science of astronomy is the most famous and the most cherished of all Astronomical literature consists of the siddhantas, called Sind-Hind by the Muslims The *siddhantas* are derived from the book Pitamaha—so called from the first father, i e , Brahman of the five siddhantas enumerated by him It is said that an Indian astronomer was invited by the Caliph Al-Mansur to give instruction in Indian astronomy The Indian system was then adopted by the arabs and the name Sind-Hind was given to one of the Indian works, which appears to have been Brahmagupta's Siddhanta This work, by command of the Caliph, was used as a guide by the arabs in matters pertaining to the stars Mathematics, which forms a basis for the advancement of all the physical sciences, was highly developed in India 'The hindus, unlike other nations, go beyond the thousand in their arithmetical terms,' thus records Alberuni, 'According to some bhuri or the nineteenth, order is the limit of reckoning while according to others the koti The Indians were the first to realise the significance of zero in calculations, they invented the decimal system, and were far advanced 'in numerical notations ' their knowledge of mensuration was also 'remarkable' In the words of Alberuni, the hindus 'hold that the circumference of a circle is thrice its diameter, but, according to Brahmgupta 31/7 times

the diameter Cosmology was an important branch of hindu sciences, they enumerated the planets, studied the motions of the earth, moon and other planets, and observed very minutely the astronomical phenomena for the purpose of computing time and perfecting their calendars They had derived accurate rules and tables 'for the calculation of the various phases of lunar and solar eclipses, and the times of beginning, middle and end as set forth in their various astronomical works, chiefly the Surya Siddhanta ' There is, however, substance in the argument of Mohammad Habib that 'this glorious heritage was not the heritage of the Indian people but only of a very small section of the bourgeois classes The overwhelming mass of the people were intentionally, purposely, and maliciously left to wallow in degrading superstitions by the pre-concerted tricks of the priests

The hindus displayed conservatism and narrow-mindedness in their general outlook Alberuni complains that they suffered from some sort of superiority complex with reference to their social attainments and cultural values, he writes

> " folly is an illness for which there is no medicine, and the hindus believe that there is no country but theirs, no nation like theirs, no kings like theirs, no science like theirs They ate haughty, foolishly vain, self-conceited and stolid They are by nature niggardly in communicating that which they knew, and they take the greatest possible care to withhold it from men of another caste among their own people, still much more, of course, from any foreigners "

The fact which struck Alberuni most unfavourably with regard to the hindus was their total isolation from the other nations and their ignorance of the outside world According to him, the hindus shunned

everything that was alien, dubbed all foreigners as the mlechhas and observed total social boycott against them 'be it by intermarriage or by sitting, eating and drinking with them,' because, thereby, they thought 'they would be, polluted There is substance in what he says about the Indian attitude, it might have partly been borne because of the barbarities perpetrated by the turkish hordes of Mahmud of Ghazni on the unarmed and innocent populace, plunder of their hearths and homes and desecration of their holy shrines, Alberuni was also conscious of this fact and he condemns the destructive activities of Mahmud of Ghazni in the following words

> "Mahmud utterly ruined the prosperity of the country, and performed those wonderful exploits by which the hindus became like atoms of dust scattered in all directions, and like a tale of old in the mouths of the people Their scattered remains cherish, of course, the most inveterate aversion towards all muslims This is the reason, too, why hindu sciences have retired far away from those parts of the country conquered by us, and have fled to places which our hand cannot yet reach, to Kashmir, Benares, and other places

There is, however, no denying the fact that the hindus, partly because of their long isolation from the outside world, suffered from ignorance about the developments in foreign countries and hence failed to appreciate the virtues of other peoples Owing to the peculiar restrictions of the caste system, even foreign travel had become a taboo with them Alberuni suggests that 'if they (the hindus) travelled and mixed with other nations, they would soon change their mind, for their ancestors were not as narrowminded as the present generation is Obviously, the ancient Indian civilisation bad lost its innate power of absorption by which it assimilated the best in the

various peoples who came into contact with it in the earlier ages Alberuni tells us that the hindus of the early eleventh century were not even interested in setting their house in order They never desired to recover or purify a thing once 'polluted' by a foreign touch they were not a owed by their sociopolitical leaders to receive, anybody who does not belong to them, even if he wished to, or was inclined to their religion Evidently, it rendered any social connection with them rather difficult, it created a gulf between them and the muslim invaders who deprived them of their independence Mohammad Habib gives a very refreshing analysis of Alberuni's observations on the conservative attitude of the hindus, he writes

> "The unity of Hinduism, if we view it rightly, does not lie in its dogmas or its social system, but in its historic continuity as a civilisation, and in the processes by which its philosophy, art and science have been evolved The insularity for which Alberuni blames the hindus was quite distinct from the fanaticism of religious bigots, it was not the principles of Islam they disliked but the manners and customs of the mussalmans They were not anxious to convert, and it was contamination rather than conversion which they resented most While tolerant of the greatest religious differences among themselves, Alberuni found them hostile to all foreigners It was not, in other words, a conflict of religious beliefs but of civilisation and culture A foreigner could no more become a hindu in the tenth century than an Asiatic can become a European today even if he wished it or was inclined to their religion "

According to yet another nature observation by R C Dutt,

> "India of the tenth and eleventh centuries resembled the middle ages in Europe in many

> respects A noble religion had become the monopoly of priests, and had been all but smothered with childish legends and image worship War and sovereignty were the monopoly of another caste, the rajput kshatriyas of India, and the feudal barons of Europe, who had both come to the forefront from the struggles of the preceding Dark Ages The people were ignorant, dispirited, enslaved, in one country as in the other The last of the poets of the Augustan and Vikramadityan ages had disappeared, and had left no successors The great names in science and learning were also a memory of the past, none had appeared again to take their place And, as if to make the parallel complete, the last remains of the Latin and Prakrit—Sanskrit spoken tongues, were replaced by modem languages—the Italian, French and Spanish in Europe, and the Hindi, etc, in India The people were kept in ignorance, fed with unwholesome superstition, beguiled with gorgeous and never-ending festivals Everything bore the appearance of disintegration and decay, and national life seemed extinct "

"But here," writes the learned scholar "the parallel ends, The sturdy feudal barons of Europe soon mixed with the people, fought the people's battles in the field, the council board or the counting house, and thus infused a new and vigorous life in modern nations In India, the rajput kshatriyas, isolated from the people, soon fell a prey to foreign invaders, and were involved in a common ruin

Indian Economy

India, on the eve of the turkish invasion, was known to be a rich country among its neighbours Gold, silver and the precious stones, accumulated in the hindu temples and the treasuries of the rajput princes, tempted Mahmud of Ghazni more than anything else to launch incessant expeditions to this country The

Indian economy, so far as its agricultural and mineral wealth was concerned, was quite sound, there was general economic prosperity Agriculture, which constituted the backbone of the national economy, was fairly developed, and the land produced enough and to spare The ruling elite were rich and affluent, the merchant princes (saudagars) rolled in wealth, We have, however, reasons to believe that there existed great disparity of wealth between the upper classes and the masses, but it was not something unusual about the Indian society of the medieval age The villagers who constituted the bulk of the nation, lived simple and frugal lives their standard of living was very low We cannot say with certainty if they were better off or worse than what they are today Bonded labour was prevalent among the agricultural classes and slavery was practised by the urban hindus, though on a domestic level, these practices bore no comparison with the elaborate system of slavery brought by the muslim invaders to India

Trade and commerce was well developed but the currency circulation was minimal because of very low prices The use of gold and silver was confined to the commercial transactions at the higher level , the masses traded commodities through barter system or its near equivalent On the whole, India presented the case of a rich country with poor masses and still poorer defence Its fabulous wealth, weak political structure and 'petrified society' extended an open invitation to the turks to lay their hands on its poorly defended treasures It was, therefore, not surprising that Mahmud of Ghazni came, he saw, and he plundered

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Emergence of Muslims

India had commercial as well as sociocultural relationships with the West-Asian countries and Europe long before the rise of Islam, the arabs served as the connecting link between India and the outside world in this regard The Indian merchants freely employed the arab sailors, commercial agents and workers in the business establishments along the Indian seacoast and the Persian Gulf countries, while the Persian merchant ships and the came caravans of arab saudagars carried merchandise across the Arabian sea and the desert to and from the Mediterranean Obviously, a large number of arabs, who were involved in the Indian trade and commerce, had made their settlements along the western seacoast of India before their conversion to Islam The Indian exports to the western countries comprised spices, cotton and silk fabrics of manifold colours and rich varieties, elephants' tusks, ivory works, precious stones, indigo, sugar and other food stuffs, There are reasons to believe that the arabs had also played a significant role in the spread of Indian culture to the western countries in the remote past The Indian sciences, philosophy and literature were not only known to the west but also 'highly valued' in the Persian Gulf countries and the Arabian peninsula The Panchatantra literature—a collection of fables containing wise maxims which give a glimpse of the ancient Indian ethics and moral code, had been

translated into Persian and Arabic languages in the sixth century of the Christian era Its Persian translation was prepared in the reign of Khusrau I, styled Naushirvan (c 53179 A D), which was, in turn, rendered into Arabic soon afterwards The Arabic translation of the Panchtantra made it well-known all over the western world' Max Mueller has it that the transmission of the Panchtantra literature to the west 'is more wonderful and instructive than the stories contained in it' Hitti opines that the world-famous Thousand And One Arabian Nights was based upon several stories of Indian origin as they found their way to the Arabian peninsula through the Panchtantra literature Similarly, Firdausi, the author of Shahnama, tells us that the ambassadors from 'a sovereign of Hind' visited the court of the Persian monarch Khusrau I and presented him with a shatranj or chessboard and asked his courtiers 'to solve the secrets of the Same' The indoor game was thus carried from India to Persia and from thence found its way to the Arabian peninsula sometime in the seventh century, it were the arabs who, directly or indirectly, carried the game to various parts of Europe

Impact of Indian Culture on Arabs

After their conversion to Islam, the arabs cast their covetous eyes on the rich seaports of western India and made a number of abortive attempts to establish their foothold there, in the long run, their efforts bore fruit in the conquest of Siestan, Sind and Multan albeit they failed to cash in on their military victories All the subsequent attempts of the arab chiefs to expand their territorial possessions and penetrate into the heart of the country were foiled by the Indian princes, Soon after, the victors themselves were cut off from the mainstream of 'the Islamic world' They gradually shed their religious zeal, settled down as petty feudal

chieftains and came to terms with their Indian subjects, The arab principalities thus assumed the general pattern of Indian feudal polity with the only difference that their rulers happened to possess anew religious faith of extraneous origin The arabs could neither make Islam 'a political force' in India nor could they present it as a sociocultural factor to reckon with Instead, they were deeply influenced by the Indian culture and high moral character of the hindus and buddhists, they constituted majority of their subjects who had stubbornly refused to embrace Islam through persuasion or force, Heavily outnumbered by their non-muslim subjects, the arab rulers of Sind depended for their very survival on the cooperation and goodwill of the former, whom they had to employ in the administration of their territories as a matter of political exigency, It led to the establishment of cordial relationships between the rulers and the ruled, and paved the way for the ultimate cultural victory of the vanquished over their new masters The latter were gradually Indianised by the brahman scholars and buddhist sages who began to educate the arab ruling elite and their wards in Indian languages, literature, philosophy, astronomy, mathematics, medicine and other sciences When the arabs established their foothold in India, Islamic culture was in its formative stage, the broad elements of which could not even roughly be defined, with the passage of time, however, they did become the cultural ambassadors of India to 'the muslim world It would not, therefore, be wrong to say that the ancient Indian culture did play a significant role in feeding and nourishing the Islamic culture in its days of infancy

The arab conquest of Siestan, Sind and Multan planted the banner of Islam on the Indian soil though the new faith was confined, at its initial stage, to a

handful of the foreign immigrants and a few thousands of the Indians who had forcibly been converted to Islam during the period of the war It was a general practice with the muslim armies of invasion to enslave the prisoners of war and all those, particularly the women, who fell into, their hands in the heat of the fury These unfortunate people were compelled to embrace Islam They were kept or sold as slaves because slavery was not only recognised as a legal institution but also practised on a commercial scale by the muslim invaders The natural biological large of the victors was to lay their hands freely on the hapless women of the vanquished who enabled them to settle down as family men Thus they muslim settlements in India

To begin with, the arab governors of Sind adopted a deliberate policy of conversions from among the sons of the soil with a view to increasing the number of the faithful' and making Islam 'a dominant force' in their newly conquered dominions, it was almost a universal feature of the Islamic polity in those days The hindus were induced to embrace Islam because they were offered better political status and material prospects in the society although majority of them resisted this tèmptation and offered a dogged resistance to the policy of forced conversions This disheartened the arab governors Therefore, by the tifue they sell u,p as de filcio rulers and untagged their principalities from the empire of the caliph, they had shed much of their religious fattaticism and zeal for the propagation of Islam Thereafter, many an Indian embraced Islam voluntarily because it preached the gospel of monotheism, practised universal brotherhood and secured socio-economic freedom to the low-caste hindus from exploitation their high-cast fellow-brethern All these factors helped but steady increase of the muslim

population in the territories under their control The arabs made settlements on the Malabar coast, converted a local hindu chieftain to Islam and established a foothold there long before the armies of Alauddin Khalji penetrated into the Deccan Islam being a missionary faith, the muslims of all ranks expressed their jubilation whenever 'a heathen' shed idolatory to join their community Their political and military leaders having failed to penetrate into the heart of India through force, the muslim saints and the bearded mullas 'in their long skirted tunics' made their appearance gradually in the Indo-Gangetic valley, then ruled over by the powerful hindu chieftains, and mixed up freely with the hindu masses, particularly the low-castes, including untouchables' and 'chandalas' who lived outside the walled towns

It provided a golden opportunity to the muslim missionaries to establish their strongholds among the poor and the oppressed hindu masses Therefore, the contention of some of the modern writers is correct that muslim settlements bad come into existence in the heart of India, including modern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, probably before the invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni, and definitely before the military conquest of northern India by Muhammad Ghori and his generals in the last quarter of the twelfth century The frequent use of the term turushka or turuska-danda in the rajput polity of the ninth and tenth centuries gives credence to this contention, the term has variously been defined as 'a sort of tax levied on the muslim settlers in the rajput dominions', or the one 'imposed on Indian subjects by their hindu chieftains to raise money with a view to fighting the muslim invaders The invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni were accompanied by the forced conversions of hindus to Islam in various parts of the country ravaged by his armies Mahmud

was gone but the bindu converts to Islam, however small their number, must have stayed behind in their country of birth

The hindu masses, in general, tolerated the existence of the neo-muslims in their midst while the rajput rulers, in spite of their perpetual warfare with the muslim armies of aggression, adopted, by and large a very liberal policy towards the muslim settlers within their dominions *Ibn i Asir* records that there was a colony of the musalmans at Banaras who bad lived there since the days of Mahmud of Ghazni and had continued to be faithful to the law of Islam and constant in prayer and good work Barani refers to a mausoleum of Sayyad Salar Masud Ghazi at Bahraich he was said to be a soldier in the army of Mahmud who had fallen fighting 'the infidels', "The fact," writes K A, Nizami, "that his name and his grave survived through the long years between the Ghaznavid invasions and the Ghurid occupation of northern india, shows that there was some muslim population to look after the grave to preserve for posterity the tradition of the Salar's martyrdom Sheikh Muinuddin, the founder of the Chishti silsila of the sufis in India, came from central Asia before the second battle of Tarain and set up his khanqah at Ajmer for the peaceful propagation of Islam Obviously, it must have been made possible only by the broad-mindedness and generosity of Prithvi Raj Cbauhan, the heroic defender of Delhi who perished in the deadly struggle against Muhammad Ghori The Khwaja was not only respected by the hindus but also allowed to make converts to Islam, he married two wives, one of whom was said to be his hindu disciple who voluntarily embraced Islam in the metropolis of the powerful Chauban state K A Nizami makes a very interesting and intelligent observation that, apart from the general policy of

religious toleration and friendly attitude displayed by the rajput chieftains and bindu population towards the handful of muslim settlers in their midst, economic and commercial interests of the Indians were also responsible for the set up of early muslim colonies in the Gangetic valley To elaborate the point Nizami writes

"The circumstances under which these muslim, colonies came to be established in India may be briefly indicated India's trade contacts with foreign lands date back to the Indus Valley Civilisation, if not earlier India produced certain commodities, like sugar cotton, colouring material, in particular indigo (nil) and katha which the colder climes desperately needed, and foreign merchants were in a position to pay higher price for them than the Indian consumer India, on the other hand, needed foreign commodities—horses of good breed, dried fruits, precious stones of various 'types (the ruby of Badakshan and the turquoise of Persia) A well-equipped warrioi of the early middle ages, if we are to trust Persian literature of the period, had to provide himself with an Indian sword, a Persian bow, and a Tatar lance The self-imposed dogmas of hindus, which we find in the Manusmriti and similar works, order the high-caste hindu to confine himself to the region where the munja gross grows and the black gazelles graze, and he is not to cross the sea or to go to countries where non-caste people govern, the lowest group of non-castes, according to the Manusmriti, are the yavanas, pehlavas, and turushkas (Greeks, Persians anti Turks) How the expansive character of Hinduism of the earlier centuries was changed into insularity by the time of the smirities does not concern us here But the presence of the arab traders in all parts of India (except Kashmir) and the complete absence of the

hindu trader from Persia and central Asia prove that the mandate of the *smrities* was effective and that the hindu commercial classes, so throughout the middle ages, bad to leave that export and import trade of India to foreigners

Almost three centuries after the arab conquest of Sind, Mahmud of Ghazni, son of Subuktagin, ascended the throne in 998 A D , with a vow that he would wage jihad—'holy war' on the kafirs infidels', and organise annual expeditions into India, 'the land of idolators' With the blessings of the Caliph of Baghdad, who bestowed on him the titles of amin ul millat 'protector of the muslims', and Yamin ud daulah—the right-hand man of the caliph', Mahmud led seventeen expeditions into India from 1000 to 1027, and carried fire and sword wherever he went The number and frequency of his raids throws light on the tireless energy, ambition and fixity of purpose of the invader He left Ghazni generally at tile end of the Indian rainy season, in SeptemberOctober, and spent the winter here which was not as cold as in Afghanistan He returned to Ghazni in March-April, before the beginning of the next rainy season, laden with every type of booty, including gold, silver, precious stones, horses, elephants men and women as slaves and all that he and his marauders could carry with them Having acquired full knowledge of the climate and topography of India, he usually tried to avoid the scorching beat of the northern plains, and, particularly, the rains which blocked the passage of the armies

Mahmud of Ghazni was a great warrior and a born leader of men, he had an imperialistic instinct though he cannot be called an empire-builder He acquired vast territorial possessions albeit it was not his aim to establish his sway over India That is why his campaigns were usually directed against big towns

and rich temples He did not attack military installations and well-defended forts unless it became impossible to avoid them After the conquest of Mathura and Kanauj, northern India lay at his feet but he lacked the acumen to bring it under his permanent control The defeated Indian princes acknowledged him sometimes as their overlord and held out promises to pay the annual tribute but none took it seriously—neither the victor nor the vanquished

Mahmud annexed Punjab, including Lahore and Multan, to the empire of Ghazni as a matter of expediency It protected the lines of communication and facilitated the movement of his armies into the heart of India for plundering, raids The very fact that Lahore was annexed by him rather very late after more than two decades of his successful military career, mitigates against the imperial motives of Mahmud

Mahmud's declared objective in carrying out repeated raids into India was the propagation and glorification of Islam It could not be achieved by the way he and his camp followers behaved plundering sprees Most of his expeditions were in the nature of highway robberies wherein he outdid the barbarians in the display of vandalism towards the vanquished A few modern historiographers have advanced the argument that Mahmud needed a lot of money to raise the army for the expansion of a vast central Asian empire, we do not agree with them It was not a needy man looking for money in the holy shrines, Mahmud was a greedy man who lived for money and died for it The base elements of greed for the precious metal and the temptation to destroy the grand edifice of a civilised society could bring no credit to him or to his creed" Of course, he knew it well that by raising the

cry of jihad against 'the infidels', he would muster a large number of recruits from all over the muslim world, willing to join him as ghazis or volunteers in his expeditions His attacks on hindu temples served both the purposes-acquisition of wealth and fame as idol-breaker,

Effects of Mahmud's Invasions

Indian invasions of Mahmud shook the entire sociopolitical fabric of northern and western parts of the country The Hindushahis, the heroic defenders of the Punjab and the northwestern frontier, perished in the struggle against the invaders, and Khyber pass, the Gateway of India, was lost to, the foreigners for ever The powerful and proud rajput princes, were defeated, humiliated or liquidated, resulting in the disinegration of their states The political division and disunity of the country was exposed The defective military structure and poor leadership took a heavy toll of the martial talent, thousands of brave fighters laid down their lives in battlefield, those who survived felt thoroughly humiliated and demoralised The citizens were massacred in cold blood by the marauders who took thousands with them as slaves, to be sold in the markets of Baghdad, Samarkand and Bukhara Flourishing cities were laid waste, magnificent temples were desecrated and plundered, and the centuries-old edifices of art, architecture and culture were ruined, The entire habitats were razed to the ground and millions of people rendered homeless and hearthless while within their own country Quite a few were forcibly converted to Islam Long after the departure of Mahmud, northern India must have presented the picture of a vast refugee camp The problems of resettlement of the uprooted people must have baffled the petty chieftains who lacked moral courage, resources and foresight to help their subjects

One shudders to think of the sad plight of the unfortunate Indians of those days who did not have the benefit of a country-wide national government to look after their interests and soothe their injured sentiments A whole civilisation was fatally wounded and left bleeding The country witnessed a dreadful holocaust in the Ghaznavid invasions, Mahmud and his turkish marauders were universally condemned as the mlechhas by the hindus, as per the testimony of Alberuni, because of their inhuman conduct and the barbarities committed by them on the unarmed and hapless citizens, including women and children

The country gotrespite for over a century and a quarter from foreign invasions after the death of Mahmud of Ghazni, it provided a golden opportunity to the hindus to reorganise their sociopolitical structure on a sound footing The rajput princes and other regional rulers were given a chance to rally and be prepared to defend their freedom against future onslaughts, more than enough time was thus allowed to the Indians to shed their regional outlook and set their house in order on national considerations That seemed to be the only way to safeguard their national independence and protect their civilisation and culture This was, however, not to be The Indian sociopolitical leadership failed to rise to the occasion, they learnt nothing from the humiliation suffered at the hands of Mahmud of Ghazni nor forgot anything about their traditional caste prejudices, and other divisive the war strategies and self-destructive tendencies Once again, they exhibited a lack of creativity in tackling the problems of national defence As soon as the foreign danger was over, numerous rajput chiefs jumped into the field to measure their swords in the traditional feudal style. Some of them were ambitious and successful warriors but devoid of statesmanship or

diplomatic skill to cam recognition as the national rulers of the country while majority of them were the typical feudal fords of average capabilities who exhibited parochial or clanish mentality They were usually at daggers drawn with each other, and they wasted their valuable resources in men and material in internecine wars They often failed, even within their own dominions, to provide adequate relief to the uprooted and badly mauled subjects needing rehabilitation They did not lack the resources perhaps albeit they proved themselves to be void of creative thinking and moral courage to guide the people As a result, India presented an equally dismal picture in 1175 when the turks struck the country for the second time, now under the leader ship of Muhammad Ghori and his brilliant 'slave' officers who swept across the whole of northern India Torn by mutual jealousies, dissensions, and other self-destructive habits, the rajputs failed to take concerted action against the invaders and, in the consequence, were crumbled to dust, one by one, in quick succession, under the heels of the turks

The causes of defeat of the feudal rajput chieftains and collapse of the hindu sociopolitical setup of early medieval India are not far to seek The decadent political structure, the defunct military organisation, the stagnant Indian society with its inherent socio-religious and economic imbalance which created a gulf between the masses and the sociopolitical leadership, have already been discussed in the foregoing pages of this study These carried the seeds of decay of the pre-muslim Indian society and its rajput leadership It was plagued, particularly, by the self-destructive charactetistics—the neglect of a sound political-cum-military machinery for collective self-defence, the lack of a feeling of overall national consciousness, and

mutual warfare No wonder, it stood a very poor chance of survival in the struggle against the turkish invaders

On the other hand, the turkish invaders displayed superiority over their Indian adversaries in many respects They possessed better military organisation, discipline and coherence They invariably followed one leader and fully realised the value of unity of command Their leaders were well-acquainted with the latest techniques of warfare, and they took keen interest in updating their knowledge in this respect The turkish invaders were fine archers who depended primarily on the use of efficient and well-disciplined cavalry against the rajput infantry They made intelligent use of they resorted to sham fights, laid ambuscade , made sudden attacks, kept armies in reserve, and employed all means, fair or rout, to win the war They fought as desperadoes They were conscious of the fact that they had to fight in a foreign land, therefore, if defeated, they might not be able to return alive to their country

The turkish invaders were full of religious zeal they stood up to spread Islam by force of arms' They believed that if they were successful in the 'holy war against the 'kafirs, this world would fie at their feet, otherwise they would attain martyrdom in their death and go straight to the jannat Thus the invaders fought for a cause while the rajputs had nothing better than clan or class interests to defend

The love for loot and plunder was, of course, a great material incentive to the turkish invaders to fight stubbornly They justly distributed the spoils among themselves and their leaders on set principles They received promotions and rewards from their leaders for excellent performance in the war

Naturally, every muslim soldier, who took part in the expedition, had his personal career and fortune at stake No high office, not even that of the sultan or supreme commander of the forces, was beyond the reach of a really capable soldier They produced, even from the ranks of their slaves, highly capable men like Qutubuddin Aibek and Bakhtiyar Khalji, but for whose contributions, Muhammad Ghori might not have been able to conquer the whole of northern India during his lifetime Attracted by the fabulous wealth of India and the love of adventure, thousands of muslim youths from central Asia swelled the ranks of the turkish armies as ghazis who usually brought with them their own horses and weapons of war, on the other hand, the military resources of the rajput chiefs were confined to their own principalities, whose dimensions were sometimes not greater than those of a modern Indian district The turkish commanders could afford to exercise qualitative control over the selection of their soldiers whereas the rajput princes had to be content with the addition to their numbers alone

The Indians had to pay heavily not only for their faults but also for their virtues of character The rajputs did not practise treachery in warfare, they were merciful and generous to their enemies to a fault A rajput would seldom attack his foe when the latter was without adequate armament, or injured or fallen on the ground, he would rather give him a fair chance to settle the scores between the parties A rajput knew how to fight and die chivalrous death whereas the sole objective of a turkish soldier was to win by hook or by crook The doctrine of ahimsa or non-violence had made the Indians, in general, and the buddhists among them, in particular, humane and peace-loving They displayed non-aggressive, rather non-defensive attitude even in the face of the unscrupulous invaders

and thus fell an easy prey to their aggression The eleventh and twelfth centuries presented the last phase of the declining ancient Indian civilisation and culture, during which Toynbee's formula of Beat-Rally-Rout played its full circle Throughout this period, the uncreative political leadership of the rajputs was faced by a recurring challenge which it repeatedly failed to meet At the first holocaust, wrought by Mahmud of Ghazni, the rajput Polity of northern India suffered a serious setback from which it never fully recovered, and at the next crisis, viz Muhammad Ghori's invasions, it 'went to pieces irretrievably' The breakdown of their political and military structure was followed quickly by the disintegration and decay of ancient Indian civilisation Toynbee describes this outcome as due to the 'nemesis of creativity' To use his phraseology, the rajput leadership had lost its claim to the mimesis of the society at large', nevertheless, it insisted on imposing its will on the society' It marked 'the most fateful occurrence' in the life-history of the Indian civilisation because the rajputs represented merely 'the dominant minority' who had ceased to be creative in their outlook, and were 'hardened into some self-stultifying idolatory—the worship of the ghost of the defunct polity' And they crumbled down to the dust before the turkish invaders owing to their sin of pride'

The Erstwhile Slaves as Masters Muharnmad Ghori had no male issue to inherit his empire, albeit he had a passion for acquiring turkish slaves whom he treated with affection and care He provided opportunities to them to develop their personalities and build their careers It shows his natural love and sympathies for the persons of his own race who had suffered immensely at the hands of the muslim invaders of the arabic and persian stocks as well as

'the infidel' mongols By purchasing turkish youth, Muhammad Ghori, in fact, liberated them from the clutches of others and afforded them royal patronage, in turn, he received immense affection and unqualified service from them Many of these slaves rose to prominence as military generals who earned reputation for courage, fighting skills and organisational abilities They served their master with loyalty and helped him in expanding the boundaries of his empire, they were devoted to the tasks entrusted to them Muhammad Ghori is said to have once remarked that these slaves were his sons who would inherit his name, fame the fortunes of his empire That is exactly what happened, on his death, his brilliant slave officers 'adorned their heads with the crown of royalty which had belonged to that king, and the influence of the light of Islam was preserved through their power over different parts and provinces of Hindustan

The Indian possessions of Muhammad Ghori were inherited by his turkish 'slave' officer Qutubuddin Aibek who set himself up as an independent ruler at Lahore and untagged his dominions from the apron-strings of the Ghurid empire His son and successor Aram Shah was overthrown by Altumish, in turn, a 'slave' officer of Aibek, who transferred his capital to Delhi in 1211 A D , thus bringing into existence what is called the 'sultanate of Delhi' The period of rule of the mamluk or slave sultans (1206-90) was marked by tension and serious conflict between the foreign muslim settlers and the indigenous hindu population of the Indo-Gangetic valley

The Influx of Foreign Immigrants The mamluk sultans were foreign victors with no roots in the Indian soil They had established their rule by force, led by 'the armies of Islam', and, therefore, depended heavily upon the foreign ruling elite as well as the soldiery for

the protection of their newly-founded state in the teeth of opposition from the rajputs They declared the sultanate to be an Islamic state which stood for the protection and welfare of muslims alone, while the hindus, who constituted the bulk of the population, were treated as second-class citizens They were dubbed as zimmis and allowed to live under the protection of 'the Islamic state' on payment of jaziya That is why, it were the muslims, whether foreign immigrants or the local converts, who constituted the backbone of the sultanate for a long time They formed the ruling elite, supplied the soldiery, and were treated as the most favoured children of the state It was, therefore, but natural for the sultans to multiply their number and strive for the, expansion of their influence throughout their dominions They extended an open invitation to all the muslim immigrants from central Asia who poured into India in never-ending streams in search of fortunes The nobility of the mamluk sultans was primarily of the turkish race though the men-of-arms and scholars of other races also formed a formidable part of it Soon birth of the sultanate, the turks were cut off from their ancestral land of central Asia which were overrun by the mongols, Altunish and Balban, the founders of the second and the third mamluk dynasties respectively, made a signal contribution towards the consolidation of the turkish rule in northern India and its protection from the mongol menace The spread of mongol sway in central Asia proved indirectly very helpful to the sultanate of Delhi, It led to the migration of muslim refugees to India on a very large scale, they were received with open arms and accorded protection and the means of livelihood by the sultans Balban rendered a great service in extending liberal patronage to the muslim immigrants from central Asia, by granting asylum and huge privy purses to the central Asian fugitive princes,

he won their goodwill and made himself famous in the far-off lands As a consequence, brilliant scholars, military generals and administrators from the muslim countries flocked to his court for service and settlement in India

Mohammad Habib describes the set up of the sultanate of Delhi to be as 'the urban revolution in northern India' The Ghurid conquest of northern India from the banks of the Ravi to those of the Brahmaputra, within a period of a quarter century is, of course, 'a paradox of Indian history In the words of Habib seldom in human history has, a country so large, so populous and, according to the academic standards or the age, so cultured and civilised as far as the upper classes were concerned, been conquered so easily and by such commonplace men (as the turks) Both in the rapidity of its establishment and longevity of the system it established, the Ghurian achievement stands in sharp contrast with the British rule The explanation lies not in the military but in the social factors He writes that the establishment of the sultanate had two special aspects (a) the substitution of the foreign turkish nobility for the thakurs as the governing class, and (b) the removal of all discriminations from the city-workers, regardless of their creed 'These two movements', according to Habib, were integrally connected All other aspects of this revolution were contingent and ancillary' In his opinion, 'the Indian city-labour, both hindu and muslim, helped to establish the new' regime, and it also maintained it through all revolutions and revolts, for over five hundred years' By the term 'hindu city-labour' he implies the hindu masses, including the artisans, city workers and menials who had suffered indignities at the hand, of their high caste aristocracy since ages, most of them were dubbed untouchables

and compelled to dwell outside the walled-cities, which were reserved for 'the seths, banyas, brokers, clerks, jotshis, teachers of all kinds, vaids, temple-priests, and all other non-productive sections of the hindu society, who depended exclusively on the former for the supply or production of grain, cloth, arms and the sundry consumer goods The 'city-labour' and peasants constituted the productive wing of the hindu society, 'who might have fought had they been so inclined, but were left outside the city walls' most of them acknowledged the muslim sway without a demur

The above-mentioned argument of Mohammad Habib in support of his contention does contain a grain of truth but is not enough to explain the wonderful contributions made consciously or unconsciously by the sultans of Delhi and their ruling elite in accelerating the process of urbanisation in medieval India The turkish conquerors made their settlements in India as urban people, this factor, however, had nothing to do with their living habits or cultural heritage In a newly conquered country, usually surrounded by hostile population of an entirely different social order the sultans as well as their provincial and local nobles and bureaucracy, for reasons of safety and congenial company, preferred to stay amidst their military regiments or armed personnel, accompanied by their entire families and house-hold establishments, including slaves, the number of which was constantly on the increase Because of their different living style, food habits, social customs, and attitudes, they did not like to stay in the midst of the hindu urban classes in the old towns, nor were they welcomed by the highly caste-ridden and closed hindu society Thus it was that the sultans and their ruling elite had to build new townships at their military cantonments or in the vicinity of the old hindu towns and cities It led to a

sort of revolution in the process of urbanisation of the country, unknown or unheard of in the past Qutubuddin Aibek laid the foundation of the first of the so-called is even cities' of Delhi built by the sultans in the early medieval period Apart from the construction of public-utility buildings, mosques and palaces, he showed some taste for architecture by ordering the erection of the Qutub Minar in the heart of the first muslim township of Delhi His example was followed with enthusiasm and zeal by the successive sultans and their nobility, and, as a result, the whole of the sultanate was studded with beautiful towns and cities which formed the central, provincial or local head quarters of the turkish bureaucracy There was hardly any old town of pre-muslim India which did not receive the face-lift by the addition of some new building complexes, architectural structures Before long, the hindu businessmen, bankers as well as the working classes, including the erstwbile low-castes, also began to make their appearane as dwellers of these towns, and the centuries-old social seclusion and caste barriers between the various sections of the hindus were obliterated to some extent through the medium of these composite urban habitats The muslims did not practise discrimination against the untouchables, artisans and other low-castes among the hindus, rather treatment meted out to them by the muslims, high and low, was more dignified than the one they received at the hands of their own high-caste co-religionists It is in this sense, and not on the arguments advanced forward b Mohammad Habib that accept the following observations, with certain reservations, of that learned scholar regarding the process of urbanisation during the sultanate period

> "The invasion of the ghurian turks brought about this great social and economic revolution because

> the industrial and social forces in the country had been prepared for it for Centuries, but their path had been barred by the ideology of the caste system and the thakur-military regime, External pressure broke this regime, and then with remarkable rapidity in the course of half a generation, the country settled on new lines Everyone, except the topmost rais and their immediate followers, accepted the new social order The forces of resistance vanished as if by magic Viewed in a proper scientific and non-communal perspective in the context of world-history and of future Indian history, the so-called ghurian conquest of India was really a revolution of Indian city-labour led by the ghurian turks We need not be surprised that those who led the revolution reaped the rewards of success But only by the substitution of the ghurian turks for the thakur-regime could the city-workers obtain their rights The one was impossible without the other Centuries of bitter experience had proved that the old hindu aristocracy was too tradition-bound to lead a social revolution

The iqtadari was a unique type of land distribution system introduced by the mamluk sultans the parallel of which is hard to find elsewhere in the Indian history, the feudal estates of the rajput era and the jagirdari system of the mughals were quite distinct from it It was a system of the allotment of vast tracts of land, called iqtas, among the military nobles As we know, handful of the turkish nobles, assisted by thousands (but not lakhs) of adventurers, apparently strangers to the land and its people, scored a military victory and set up as rulers The number of the victors was very small, rather insignificant, as compared with the teeming millions who had been subjugated by them The conquerors established their military hold over important towns and fortifications albeit the vast

land mass of the countryside with the bulk of the Indian population was yet to be explored and conquered In order to facilitate this task, the sultans parcelled out their vague and undefined dominions into iqtas and distributed these among their ambitions and enterprising nobles The latter, called the iqtadars or muqtas, were instructed to carry on aggressive campaigns against the powerful and refractory hindu chiefs in their region and bring them under effective subjugation Literally, the word 'iqta' means 'a portion', 'technically, it was the land or revenue assigned by the ruler to an individual in lieu of service to the state The iqta was a half-conquered and poorly administered territory over which the assignee was expected to establish a firm hold and introduce civil administration there as he thought fit or feasible The iqtadar recruited his own army which was made self-supporting by utilising the resources of his possessions He held the iqta almost as rent-free grant in lieu of the state service, He paid to the sovereign a specified amount of kharaj or offered presents in cash or kind, including gold, silver, horses, elephants or other precious articles every year and rendered military service to the state when needed Qutubuddin Aibek and Altumish 'derived full advantage' from the iqta system, 'they used it as an instrument for liquidating the feudal order of Indian (hindu) society and linking up the far-flung parts of the empire to one centre Through it they satisfied also the cupidity of the turkish governing class, and solved the urgent problem of maintenance of law and order and the collection of revenues in the newly conquered territories'

The iqtadars were not ordinary jagirdars or holders of rent-free assignments, they made personal contribution towards the expansion and consolidation

of the turkish rule in India in the thirteenth century Most of them were self-made men who held the iqtas as their personal estates which were passed on to their descendants in heritage Ordinarily, the foreign immigrants among the muslims shunned cultivation because their services were in great demand in civil and military affairs Soldiery was a very respectable and paying profession for the commoners among the immigrants who could secure service under any noble in any part of the sultanate they pleased It needs no argument that before the advent of the muslims, the entire countryside was inhabited by the hindus, the sons of the soil The iqtadars were always eager to increase the number of their co-religionists within the territories under their control Therefore, they encouraged the settlement of muslim families in the countryside and distributed lands among them for cultivation They attempted to create a nucleus of the muslim agriculturist class in each village in the midst of the hindu peasantry The lands of the refractory hindu peasants were confiscated and distributed among the muslim soldiery and other immigrants from central Asia Very often the hindu peasantry resisted the usurpation of their ancestral fields by the iquidars and their muslim followers, and, at places, took up arms against them It led to revolts of the hindu peasantry, followed by armed conflicts and social tension in the countryside It is in this sense that the sociocultural background of the military expeditions of Altumish and Balban against the hindu peasantry of the Indo-Gangetic valley can be properly understood, In an attempt to solve the law and order problem through the policy of blood and iron, Balban strove his best to bring the hindu populace of the countryside under his firm control by the transfer of cultivable lands to the muslims and establishment of their social groups in the midst of the hindu peasantry, Balban's

campaign against the rebellious meos or mewaits (in modern Haryana) can be cited as a typical example in support of our contention Balban moved out of Delhi at the head of a large army and set up his military camp in the heart of the meo-infested areas The jungle around Delhi was cleared and roads constructed to facilitate the movement of armies, a fort was built at Gopalgir and many police posts established in the whole iqta of Delhi

The sultan meted out a very cruel treatment to the mewatis and their families, about a hundred thousand males above twelve were massacred in cold blood, their women were enslaved, property pillaged and houses put on fire Their lands were confiscated and distributed among his enterprising turko-afghan officers Similar policy was adopted by Balban towards the hindu peasantry of the Doab and Oudh (modern Uttar Pradesh) The people of these regions were rich and prosperous owing to the fertility of the soil, they did not pay taxes to the state regularly nor permitted the muslim officers to establish their foothold in their habitats They resented and offered tough opposition to the muslim settlers in their midst The people as a whole felt indignation over the loss of their national independence, though to their misfortune, they failed to produce any leader of standing who could unite them to wage a struggle for freedom against the turkish rule Balban made up his mind to crush the hindu resistance in these for all times to come He parcelled out the entire Gangetic valley into small iqtas or fiefs which were assigned to ambitious turko-afghan officers, called iqtadars, with the instructions to crush the insubordinate kafirs with an iron hand He built strong forts at Kampil, Patiali and Bhojpur which were heavily garrisoned by the state troops, ready to help the iqtadars in their punitive expeditions

against the hindu peasantry The muslim settlers were granted tax-free land with powers to defend themselves by force of arms Barani writes that the sultan himself went to Kampil and Patiali and stayed in these territories for five or six months The whole villages of the rebels were wiped out of existance, and their women enslaved A lot of plunder of that region came to Delhi where slaves and cattle became cheap The state policy of the mamluk sultans, particularly the institution of iqtadari went a long way in establishing Islam as a social force in the Indo-Gangetic valley

The iqtadari system became a hereditary institution with the passage of time, the emergence of the hereditary iquidars or feudal lords among the turkish nobility laid the foundations of their rule very deep in the Indian soil, The population of the muslims rose by leaps and bounds The hereditary iqtadars backed by a solid mass of muslim peasantry, became so well-established and assertive that they, in turn, began to defy the central authority of the sultanate whenever they could afford to do so That is why Alauddin Khalji and Muhammad bin Tughluq had to adopt stringent measures against them They retained the iqtas as administrative units but changed the method of recruitment of their holders They resumed the hereditary iqtas which were entrusted to civil-cum-military servants who acted somewhat like district officers under the overall supervision of the regional or provincial governors As the provincial government of the sultanate was not well-developed, some of the iqtadars were under the direct control of the central government and were treated as provincial governors for all intents and purposes Politically important or prosperous iqtas were given to the princes of the royal blood as their personal estates The evil of hereditary

iqtadars was revived by the successors of Alauddin Khalj and subsequently made universal by Firoze Tughluq who parcelled out the whole of his kingdom into iqtas or fiefs which were distributed among the nobles as rent-free assignments Theoretically, the iqtadars were under obligation to remit their surplus revenues to the state treasury and get their accounts checked by the royal auditors of the diwan i wazarat Of course, the sultan granted villages, agricultural lands or residential places as rent-free grants to scholars, saints and others within an iqta which were excluded from the jurisdiction of the iqtadars The latter, in turn, granted free assignment to their relations, subordinates and brilliant lieutenants, thus strengthening and perpetuating the feudal element in the muslim sociopolitical order Before the turn of the century, the muslim immigrants, under the leadership of the turkish aristocracy, were well-established in Hindustan which they adopted as the country of their domicile, and the population of muslims had grown enough to assume the form of a well-regulated society, distinct from the hindus Thus the dawn of the fourteenth century saw the populace of India divided horizontally into two well-defined social orders, based on religious denominations—Hinduism and Islam

Muslim Social Structure

The thirteenth century, as reviewed in historical perspective in the previous chapter, constitutes the most crucial period in the history of Indian civilisation and culture It witnessed a serious conflict, father a direct clash or head-on collision between two social systems, Hinduism and Islam—the one indigenous and the other with an extraneous background With the collapse of the rajput feudal polity in its struggle against the turkish arms, the Indian society, in the north, was placed at the mercy of the Dew masters

and their wholly foreign ruling elite 'The foreign victors laid the foundations, in Delhi, of a new political structure, based on exotic religious denomination, and championed the cause of Islam not only as a missionary faith but also as a new social system

Having lost their national independence, the socio-economic as well as religious leadership of the hindus were put on the defensive They failed to stem the rising tide of Islam, backed by the victorious soldiers in shining armour Rendered defenceless and thoroughly demoralised, they retreated from their positions of sociocultural predominance, and sought shelter in the conch-shell of their rigid caste structure, leaving the hindu masses to strive for bare existence and manage their affairs as they could afford

With the strengthening of its military hold and stabilisation of the Islamic state in Delhi, the hindus of all classes, high and low, had to bear with it Having failed to turn the muslims out of the country by force, they had no other alternative but to submit to their new masters and accept the fait accompli On the other hand, the turkish victors also failed in their ultimate goal to compel or persuade the entire hindu populace to embrace Islam with a view to transforming the Dar ul Harab of India into Dar ul Islam as they had done in Persia and other countries of central Asia Therefore, after strenuous struggle, they came to terms with their hindu subjects The forces of social stress and strain continued to rage with varying degrees of intensity in various parts of the country throughout the thirteenth century The net outcome of this struggle was that, by the beginning of the fourteenth century, Islam was firmly rooted in the Indian soil as a powerful social force The Indian society thus came to be divided horizontally into two well-defined social orders, based on religious denominations, for the sake

of convenience, we may term them as the Hindu Society and the Muslim Society respectively

Composition of the Muslim Society

Muslim Aristocracy Shihabuddin alias Muizuddin, better known as Muhammad Ghori, the conqueror of northern India, belonged to the turkish race, therefore, the military and political power of the muslims in India was concentrated in the hands of his turkish slave officers, generally called the muizze or ghurid or ghori nobles They supplied as many as three ruling dynasties, in succession, to the sultanate of Delhi in the thirteenth century The ruling elite of the sultanate during the reign of the mamluk sultans (1206-90) were composed exclusively of the foreign immigrants, including the turks, persians afghans, and 'a sprinkling of the arabs', they comprised the aristocracy or 'upper class' of the muslim society Of course, the turk acted as the most jealous guardian of this aristocracy, his 'military power enabled him to reserve the sociocultural leadership or the muslims for the men of his own race' The turkish aristocracy suffered from some of superiority complex which was based on their phenomenal success in the struggle for existence They bad not only carved out a mighty kingdom in India, far away from their homeland, but also successfully withstood 'the mongol storm when all others went down elsewhere in Asia There was 'substance in Balban's claim that not less than fifteen sovereign princes from muslim Asia had found asylum in his kingdom, Unquestionably, the Indian turk had proved himself the leader of the eastern world

Within themselves, the turkish ruling elite could roughly be classified into three categories The ghurids proper were the kinsmen of Muhammad Ghori and members and relations of his ancestral clan The tazik

turks were the freemen, the turkish immigrants who bad come to India of their choice and sought patronage of Muhammad Ghori and his lieutenants, they constituted a microscopic section of the turkish nobility The third category comprised the turkish slave officers of Muhammad Ghori, they were most numerous and influential among the nobility Muhammad Ghori, himself had put greater faith in his slave officers and shown preference to them over the others, Qutubuddin Aibek, who inherited his Indian possessions, belonged to this category In the struggle for sociopolitical dominance, the turkish slave officers of Qutubuddin Aibek, called the qutbi nobles, came to acquire a premier position among the nobility during the reign of their master, Sbamsuddin Altumish was their chief representative Altumish, in turn, created a new class of the turkish nobility which comprised his own slaves, promoted as officers They were referred to as the shamsi nobles, after the name of their master After sonic time, during the heydays of Altumish's reign, forty of these slave officers constituted the top leadership among the shamsi nobles who held all the important portfolios as state ministers and regional military governors, they earned the nickname of chahalgani or the chalisa—'the forty' They helped Altumish in the consolidation of the sultanate Balban, who established the third mamluk dynasty on the throne of Delhi, in 1266 A D , was one of 'the forty' slaves of Altumish

Classification of the Aristocracy

The ruling elite of the sultanate, who comprised the newly emerged aristocracy of their times in the thirteenth century, could be vaguely classified into two categorise, the *ahl e saif* or the umara and the *ahl e qalam* or the ulama

The *ahl e saif* or *ahl e shamshir* ‘men of the sword’ belonged to the warrior class among the immigrants who had settled their scores with the rajput adversaries on the battlefield It was not surprising, therefore, that their military rank also determined their social status in the aristocracy,, they bore titles such as khan, malik amir, sipahsalar and *sar i khail* in the descending order of socio-political hierarchy The members of the royal household comprised but a part of the ahl e saif, at the best, they could be called primus inter pares The sultanate was based on the active support and cooperation of the umara or the nobility They constituted the back bone of the sultanate and formed a part and parcel of the sovereign power The nobles commanded the armies and contributed towards the establishment and expansion of the sultanate They supplied ministers, provincial governors, iqtadars and other high executive officers from among them and exercised great influence on the state policies The crown was not beyond the reach of a capable and ambitious noble A warrior of higher rank was generally styled as amir (plural umara), the title once borne by the sovereign muslim rulers of central Asia They were all foreign immigrants, with the predominance of the turks, during the period of rule of the mamluk sultans

The *ahl e qulam* ‘men of the pen’ were the muslim theologians, scholars and administrators who were collectively known as the *ulama*, they constituted the brain of the sultanate while the umara can be referred to as the sword-arm of the turkish rule in India The ulama were mostly of non-turkish origin, the arabic and persian theologians and intellectuals occupied a predominant position among them They held a firm hold over the missionary organs of Islam, and controlled the mosques, khanqahs, educational

institutions and holy shrines Most of them belonged to the orthodox sunni school of thought The *sadr us sadur* the minister incharge of the ecclesiastical department and religious endowments and qazi ul quzat-the chief justice', usually acted as spokesmen of the ulama and were treated as their representatives by the latter The ulama exercised a great influence on the policies and functions of the state They interpreted the Islamic law and regarded themselves as the spiritual guardians of the Islamic state They enjoyed respect and prestige among the muslim masses and, because of their popular appeal, demanded attention of the sultan and the nobility alike The sultan always felt obliged to treat them with deference Even the most powerful of the mamluk sultans, Ghiasuddin Balban, bad to obey them in the pursuit of his state policy, and keep them in good humour by extending liberal state patronage The ulama tended to dominate the state politics, sometimes over the head of the nobility, under the weak or orthodox sultans

The ruling elite of the sultanate, including the umara and the ulama, were extremely conscious of their sociopolitical importance, and they jealously safeguarded their high privileges, so also did the mamluk sultans They did not tolerate that the Indian converts to Islam and other muslims of non-privileged classes should claim a status of social or political equality with them We have it on the testimony of Barani that the earlier sultans of Delhi contemptuously treated the low-born people Alturnish had dismissed thirty-three officers from government service on account of their low-birth It has already been explained in the first chapter of this study, entitled 'The State and Society', how Balban freely resorted to discrimination between the high born and

the low-born muslims in the matter of recruitment to the higher state services The sovereign was expected to set the trends in the sociocultural leadership, therefore, following in his footprints, the muslim aristocracy observed class, racial and tribal distinctions in on way better than the caste divisions of the hindus The exercised discriminations between themselves on the bases of racial and lineal considerations There existed a sharp cleavage between the arabs and non-arabs who did not belong to 'the holy land' of the Prophet Among the arabs, higher social status was enjoyed by sheikhs and sayyads A sheikh venerable leader' chiamed descent from the Qureshi tribe of the Prophet which was, in turn, split up into three branches-the Siddiqi, Faruqi and Abbasi A sayyad which implied 'a lord', sometimes styled as pirzada or 'the descendant of a saint or a mushaikh claimed descent from Fatima, daughter of the Prophet Next place of pride in the social hierarchy of the muslim, aristocracy was occupied by the highborn among the turkish slave officers and others in the descending order The prejudicial conduct of the mamluk sultans, and the racial and lineal divisions among the aristocracy were in no way conducive to the wellbeing of the sultanate of Delhi and its grandees

The non-privileged classes of the muslims or the masses in the thirteenth century India included in their fold, among others, well-marked social segments of Indian converts to Islam, the slaves and their off-springs The muslim society of India, in the thirteenth century, did not have a middle class though some rudiments of this class can be discerned among the awam o khalq For this purpose, reference may be made to the soldiery, particularly those who received land grants in lieu of service either from the sultans or their nobles, including the iqtadars The muslim,

commoners who occupied subordinate ranks and positions in, the army and civil services, particularly the judiciary and education, also belonged to this category The muslim, caravan leaders and those who plied trade and commerce, of course, formed but a microscopic minority in the vast body of the hindu bankers and businessmen, whose standing and status as middle class had received recognition at the hands of the mamluk sultans in spite of their categorisation as the zimmis A select few among the muslim merchants, styled saudagars, tajirs and malik ut tujjar, were admitted to the muslim aristocracy by the sultans

The Indian Muslims The hindu converts to Islam and their off-springs were called the Indian muslims To begin with, their number was small but by the close of the thirteenth century they had come to form the bulk of the muslim population Most of them belonged to the erstwhile low-castes among the hindus, including the artisans, urban working classes and the 'untouchables' On embracing Islam, they at once received liberation from religious, social and economic disabilities from which they had suffered at the hands of their highborn hindu community, They were exepmted from the payment of jaziya and were recognised as the full-fledged citizens of the Islamic state They received perks from the state and were given preference over the hindus in the matter of recruitment to the civil and military services Nevertheless, the Indian muslims could not claim social equality with the muslim aristocracy of the foreign pedigree Most of the Indian muslims, because of their poor educational, sociocultural and economic backgrounds, were incapable of competing with the foreign immigrants for the higher social status Some of them who acquired fortunes or claimed academic

attainments in the Persian and Arabic languages and literature or won laurels in the military service, without receiving corresponding recognition or promotions, felt discouraged and demoralised Deprived of higher sociocultural status and recognition by the prejudicial attitude of the foreign immigrants, they smarted under discontent and, in 1290 A D , actively participated in the overthrow of the ruling oligrachy, under the leadership of the young khalji nobles who belonged to the non-privileged class of the turkish immigrants

The Slaves The system of slavery was prevalent in India before the advent of Islam albeit the mamluk sultans and their turkish nobility, who themselves happened to be the products or a highly commercialised institution of slavery, gave anew dimension to this social evil The practice of recruiting domestics and hired labour for menial services and manual work was conspicuous by its absence among them Almost all the manual and menial services were rendered by the slaves It were not the hired labour or paid workers but slaves who supplied their services to the court and the royal harem, huge armies of slaves were put to work for the construction of roads and public buildings in state-owned karkhanas and other public-utility services They were employed by the aristocracy as retainers and domestics, they constituted 'a familiar feature of every respectable muslim home'

K M Ashraf observes

> "The life of a muslim nobleman was so much divided between war and pleasure (razm and bazm) that he hardly found any time to attend to his personal and domestic work In course of time, the code of social behaviour began to view domestic work as unworthy of a gentleman's

> dignity and honour The most important section of these domestics was comprised of male and female slaves"

No wonder, the turkish sultans as well as their nobility strove hard to multiply their slaves by all means, they allowed their slaves to marry and bring up families because the off-springs of the slave couples also became automatically the property of their master, and this factor, incidentally added to the growing muslim population of Hindustan The eunuchs constituted a special class of slaves who were procured for looking after the royal harem and the female apartments of the muslim aristocracy Small children were either purchased or captured apparently as prisoners of war during the course of military confrontation and mercilessly castrated We have it on the testimony of Yule and Barbosa that a flourishing trade in eunuchs was carried on in Bengal in the thirteenth century, stout and healthy eunuchs were sometimes imported from the Malay archipelago K M Ashraf, on the basis of his intensive researches, throws interesting sidelights on the institution of slavery as popularised by muslim rulers in India, he writes

> "Female slaves were of two kinds, those employed for domestic and menial work, and others who were bought for company and pleasure The former, wanting in education and skill, and bought expressly for rough domestic work, were often subjected to all sorts of indignities, the latter had a more honourable and sometimes even a dominating position in the household Apart from the slave girls of India, female slaves were also imported from China and Turkistan On the whole the selection among the female slaves was made somewhat on the lines humourously suggested by a noble 'Buy a khurasani woman for her work, a hindu woman for her capacity for nursing

> children, a Persian woman for the pleasure of her company, and a Transoxianian for thrashing her as a warning for the other three' "

In his deliberations on the status of slaves, K M Ashraf makes highly informative observations which the author of this study would like to reproduce extensively for the benefit of the readers, he observes

> "It is usual to assume that slaves had no defined status or rights under Muslim rule in Hindustan Such an opinion is not warranted by facts Theoretically speaking, since a slave was usually a convert to Islam, he possessed the same rights as any other member of Muslim society which is still conspicuous for a certain amount of feeling of brotherhood and equality Thus, his moral claims, though they might not receive due and full recognition, could never be denied If he was originally a hindu, and probably of a lower caste, the social change was decidedly for the better Even if he had belonged to a higher caste, he had lost his status in hindu society and could not go back to it except under very humiliating conditions

> "In practice, the position of a slave was very different He was usually a prisoner of war, and according to the military usage of the age, his life was at the mercy of his captor, who had full power of killing him or of otherwise disposing of him This was clearly understood on both sides long before a military engagement commenced So when a conqueror (now master of the slave) chose to spare the life of a slave and employ him for menial work, it was an act of favour and of special benevolence on the part of the former, Similarly, when the prisoner of war had been sold in the market and bought by a purchaser, he was as much the property of the buyer as any other commodity, and as such, could be given away as a

> gift or disposed of in any other way, No shrewd captor or buyer, however, neglected to take good care of his property which, given proper attention, could be converted into ready money, perhaps with a good deal of profit"

That the Islamic social order, newly planted in India, which was, in theory, based on such high-sounding principles as 'social equality, brotherhood, dignity and self-respect of the individual' would be degraded to such limits, could never be envisaged by Hazarat Muhammad, the Prophet Their lust for power had divided the muslim elite into racial groups and prompted them to exercise discrimination between the highborn and the low-born, while their greed for material benefits and exploitative spirit were responsible for reducing the human beings to the position of cattle, rather worse than that No wonder, during the sultanate period, a horse of good breed was better looked after and more highly priced than a dozen men and women slaves The hindus bad practised untouchability and were guilty of having exploited their low-castes or the working classes, what the muslims did in this regard was equally disgraceful

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Socio-Economic Developments

Socio-cultural development is a continuous phenomenon, a slow and steady process, for the study of which periodisation on the basis of political and military episodes or upheavals is not always feasible No military action or political change, however sudden or violent can mark either the abrupt ending of a cultural state or pinpoint the transplantation of new sociocultural trends among the people affected by it The dynastic or political divisions of medieval Indian history, or its vertical treatment by the author of this study, with reference to the socio-economic development of India, may therefore, seem to be apparently irrational or an scientific, such a treatment of the subject bristles with numerous difficulties too The author is conscious of the fact that the arab conquest of Sind or invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni or Muhammad Ghori signal neither the beginning nor the ultimate outcome of the multifarious internal as well as external social forces at work in the life of the Indians albeit, in his humble opinion, these events or political developments can be earmarked as milestones in the long and chequered course of the Indian social stream like that of the Ganges from Kailash to the bosom of the Indian attempt to understand the sociocultural development of medieval Indian society in its historical perspective, the author has actually been confronted with the intriguing problems of the forceful

and continuous temporal dynamics of socio-religious and cultural change in India Sometimes these political developments give birth to or accelerate the forces of social change while the others may themselves be the outcome of such forces at work in the preceding period The state does play an important role in shaping the character and life of its people, and, the author had taken pains, in the first chapter of this study, to explain how the sociocultural development of a people can be understood better within the framework of a political system to which they belong It is in this context that he strives to point out the social content in the state policies, military campaigns, and administrative setup of the mamluk sultans, the khaljis, the tughluqs, the rulers of Bahmani and Vijayanagar kingdoms, and the imperial mughals, respectively An appreciation of this line of approach may enable the readers to find out the explicit and implicit elements of the medieval Indian society and Culture as it finally assumed the shape during the period of rule of Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan (1556-1657)

It has rightly been said that the 'development of a social system consists of a process of structural adjustment under stresses generated by cultural innovations from internal or external sources As interests of groups or associations, cultural complexes compete for institution within a social system till the tension is resolved either through integration by compatibility or outright rejection This applies also to goals and values that normally serve as functional criteria of structural compatibility' Over a period of five hundred years, from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries, medieval Indian social system was shaped in stages by the dynamics of forces which operated at three different levels—(a) within the hindu

society, (b) on the newly emerging social setup of the muslims, and, (c) between the two sociocultural streams of Hinduism and Islam

The study of political history of medieval India in the first two, volumes brings home to us that the major part of the country remained free from muslim domination in the thirteenth century, Alauddin extended the boundaries of his empire to the south albeit his actual sovereignty stopped short at the Vindhyas save in the western part of the Deccan, during the last three years of his reign The imperial age of the sultanate lasted hardly three decades in the long span of three centuries of its existence Therefore, most of the provinces with their hindu multitudes remained outside the pale of the sultanate of Delhi Thus the hindu social structure of the pre-muslim days, as discussed in the second chapter of this study, remained intact in many provinces, including southern India, for a long time Whereas, the hindu subjects of the sultanate were under constant pressure to fight for the survival of their indigenous social order, the militant Islam had but 'little direct effect on the age-old social life' of the people elsewhere. Indirect, however, 'the new menace to the existence of the indigenous culture' generated certain forces of social change as a protective measure The saints of the bhakti movement showed their appearance in various parts of the country as rallying forces for cultural survival vis-a-vis the external impact' " The period witnessed 'the external impact of Islam, both politico-military and cultural, resulting in the decline of the superordinate socio-occupational position of the kshatriya and brahaman caste guilds Cultural innovations in military, administration and revenue farming necessitated specialised training of large selected cadres with the consequence of open

recruitment and promotion, based on merit rather than birth ascription' Side by side, the instinct of self reservation promoted the priestly class among the hindus to exhibit more orthodoxy and conservatism in their outlook than ever before, they made the caste structure still more rigid, and produced a number of smriti digests and commentaries 'tending towards the systematisation of the old social and religious law

In the second instance, the muslim social order had assumed a definite form and shape by the beginning of the khalji rule, the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries constituted a formative period for its growth and development The population of the muslims, during this period, increased rapidly, and so also did their social stratification Alauddin Khalji took the banner of Islam as a political force to the south, to which the sociocultural background was provided by Muhammad bin Tughluq a little later These two sultans played a significant role in the spread of Islamic culture in the Indian peninsula

In the third place, the fourteenth and fifteenth centimes were marked by vigorous interaction between the sociocultural stream of hinduism and Islam in every aspect of human life, giving birth to a stable and fairly progressive Indo-Muslim society There was a healthy give-and-take between the hindus and muslims at levels The forces of synthesis between their respective systems of education and learning, art and architecture became fully operative, while the bhakti reformers and the sufi saints attempted to bridge, the gulf between the two communities on religious, moral and spiritual planes The social and cultural intercourse between the two communities had gone so far ahead that 'when Babar appeared on the scene, he had to fight to combined forces of the hindus and the muslims

The Khalji Revolution

The establishment of the Khalji dynasty at Delhi in 1290 has been recognised by the modern historiographers of medieval Indian history a great revolution in the sociopolitical setup of the sultanate and its ruling elite The khaljis were one of the sixty-four clans of the turks albeit they did not belong to the ruling turkish elite of the mamluk sultans They migrated to modern Afghanistan from their homeland in the fourth century of the Christian era, where they gradually adopted afghan sociocultural traits and were usually mistaken for them Barani records that Jalaluddin, the founder of the Khalji dynasty, 'came of a race different from that of the turks, so that he had no confidence in them, nor would the turks own him as belonging to the number of friends The khaljis joined the armies of Mahmud of Ghazni and Muhammad Ghori in large numbers and won applause from their masters for loyal and efficient service When Muhammad Ghori was defeated and badly wounded in the first battle of Tarain (1190 A D) at the hands of Pithvi Raj (111) Chauhan, a khalji soldier saved his rife and drove him to safety Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khalji rose to be a military general of Muhammad Ghori, and he was given a free hand by the sultan in the conquest of Bihar and Bengal He was rewarded with appointment as the governor of the conquered territories under the overall supervision of Qutubuddin Aibek, the then viceroy of Delhi Under the independent rule of Aibek and the successive sultans of Delhi, the governorship of Bihar and Bengal was held by the khalji nobles almost as a matter of right They afforded ample opportunities to the men of their clan to secure civil and military assignments Incidentally, the mongols carried fire and sword into the valleys of' Helmand and Kabul in the beginning of the thirteenth century, which compelled the khaljis to

migrate en masse to India and swell the ranks of the muslim immigrants who made settlements in the Gangetic valley as soldiers and agriculturists They constituted the masses among the muslim settlers, a few of their leaders occupied but subordinate administrative and military posts under the mamluk sultans The khaljis had no claims to political power in Turkistan, of Afghanistan nor were they recognised as a part of the ruling, elite of Delhi

The mamluk sultans, on the other hand, had introduced racialism in Muslim politics to serve their personal ends, they exercised racial discrimination at higher levels with a vengeance Such a policy was not conducive to the welfare of the nascent Islamic state in India because it invariably led to a tug of war between the rival factions of the nobility Accordingly, the capital was constantly plagued by court intrigues, disaffection and political murders, occasionally bursting forth into open revolts and bloodbaths which did not spare the sultans either

This game of power-politics, based on racial considerations, proved disastrous for the muslim nobility as a class which constituted the backbone of the sultanate, it wiped out many a capable military general, Administrator and scholar, and deprived the state of their useful services Balban made racialism and genealogy a fad in the matter of recruitment to higher services It provoked widespread resentment among the muslim masses whoses number was ever on the increase by the addition of hindu converts and foreign immigrants among the rank and file It gave a setback to the promising youth amongst them who aspired to secure gainful employment and build their careers on personal merit, they were alienated against the privileged aristocracy as it had come into existence during the rule of the mamluk sultans Jalaluddin

Khalji, the governor of Samana under Kaiqubad, belonged to the unprivileged muslim, masses who came to acquire a position of eminence at the royal court on merit as if by default Therefore, when he carried out a military coup against the successors of Balban, he enjoyed, by and large, the cooperation, support and good wishes of the muslim masses although the aristocracy of Delhi took some time to shed their prejudice against the man, representing the wretched of the soil, who had dared to claim the throne Barani writes that

> "In the course of the first year of his reign the citizens and soldiers and traders of all degrees went to Kilughari, where the sultan (Jalaluddin Khalji) held a public darbar They were struck with admiration and amazement at seeing the khaljis occupying the throne of the turks, and wondered how the throne had passed from the one to the other'

The accession to the throne of Jalaluddin Khalji was, therefore, not a mere change of dynasty, it signified a revolution in the muslim politics of India It marked the end of an epoch of racial discrimination among the Muslim aristocracy and sounded the death-knell of the privileged turkish nobility who had perpetuated their dominance in the Muslim politics and social sphere for a century

Social Content in the Policies of Alauddin Khalji

Alauddin Khalji (1296-1316), a nephew and son-in-law (if Jalaluddin Khalji who committed the murder of the reigning monarch and usurped the throne, was by far the greatest of all the sultans of Delhi, except Sher Shah Sur and Akbar, no Muslim ruler of India stands comparison with him As a man, he left much to be desired albeit be transformed the kingdom of Delhi into a mighty Indian empire by his sheer force of

character and military skill, the credit for the penetration of Muslim arms and plantation of Islamic faith and culture in the south goes exclusively to him He protected the sultanate as well as the people of India, against the fury of the mongols, he struck terror in the hearts of the foreign invaders

Separation of Religion from Politics Alauddin Khalji was a despotic ruler, in an attempt to strengthen his autocratic rule, he crippled the power of the nobility and feudal aristocracy and did not give the *ulama* a free hand in determining the state policies He was a highly self-willed man, with unscrupulous and aggressive temperament who never brooked interference into the state affairs by the nobility or the ulama The nobles were kept firmly under his thumb by the sultan while the ulama, though kept in good humour, were seldom taken into confidence in the pursuit of his political or administrative measures Of course, Alauddin took care not to antagonise the mullas and sheikhs through public criticism or ridicule The muslim scholars, saints and divines received liberal stipends (*madad i muash*) and honours from the state All posts in the judicial and educational establishments were reserved for them their chiefs were given a free hand in administering the educational institutions, courts, holy places, religious endowments and charitable funds They also enjoyed sufficient freedom of action in tackling the socio-religious problems of the muslim community At times, Alauddin suceessfully exploited muslim fanaticism in his wars against the hindu chieftains and treatment of the zimmis Nevertheless, he was the first among the sultans of Delhi to separate religion from state politics, he initiated what may be called a secular state policy based on the principles of absolute despotism Barani has to say that Alauddin Khalji,

> "came to the conclusion that polity and government are one thing, and the rules and decrees of (Islamic) Law are another Royal commands belong to the king, legal decrees rest upon the judgment of qazis and muftis In accordance with this opinion, whatever affair of state came before him, he only looked to the public good, without considering whether his mode of dealing with it was lawful or unlawful He never asked for legal opinions about political matters, and very few learned men visited him

Administrative Reforms Alauddin Khalji liberalised the state policy in the matter of recruitment of the public services Ever since tile inception of the sultanate, Persian had been introduced as the court language as well as the medium for the transaction of the state business To begin with, it proved as a handicap to the Indians, including the hindu converts to Islam, in securing employment under the mamluk sultans With the passage of time, however, the Indian converts took tip the study of this language with enthusiasm, they were followed in this though hesitatingly, by the hindus By the turn of the Century, the number of Persian educated Indians including hindus and muslims, had grown fairly large , it was, therefore, quite natural that they should aspire to seek employment for career under the government of the day The mamluk sultans had reserved all the higher posts for the foreign immigrants, they exercised racial discrimination in the matter of recruitment to such services This policy was discarded by Alauddin Khalji who threw open the public services to commoners, including the nonprivileged muslim immigrants Indian converts to Islam, and even the hindus It made him very popular with his subjects An excellent judge of human character, Alauddin had the knack of selecting the right men for the right job

and knew how to get the maximum out of them Though semiliterate, and possessed of a mere rule of thumb knowledge of things, he handled the administrative problems with an air of professional competence He established peace and order in his dominions and provided much-needed security to his subjects He tamed the services, suppressed the bureaucratic evils of indiscipline, corruption and bribery , none but the most honest and efficient officials had the chance of survival under the vigilent eyes of the imperial reporters and spies His economic reforms, involving the fixation of prices, control of the markets and rationing of the consumers' goods, though not based on very scientific principles, were a unique contribution, envisaged by him far ahead of his times In certain matters of land reforms, military organisation, and socio-economic policies, Alauddin Khalji anticipated Sher Shah Sur, his administrative get up carried the seeds of a progressive and secular state, which even the peace and stability for two or three generations more, could have ushered in an era of peace and prosperity, and advanced the progress of the country by at least two centuries The fiscal policy of Alauddin Khalji, including the land reforms, price control and market regulations, overhauled the Indian economy, promoted trade and commerce, and exercised a deep impact on the socioeconomic condition of his urban as well as rural subjects, hindus and muslims alike , that is why its detailed treatment in this study merits consideration

Strange though it may seem, the highly progressive fiscal reforms, as introduced by Alauddin Khalji, which have ensured a place of prominence for him in the annals of socio-economic history of the times, had a very humble beginning During the early years of his reign, he had to face quite a few revolts at

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> "The last and not the least cause, they (the wise men) thought, arose from the unequal division of property, they considered that the wealth of a rich empire, if confined to a few persons, only rendered them, as governors of provinces, more like independent princes than subjects of the state"

In order to eliminate this 'source of trouble', Alauddin Khalji felt tempted and took vigorous steps to lay his bands on the property of the nobility and The well-to-do citizens In a more sophisticated language, the sultan adopted a fiscal policy and introduced important changes in the revenue system of the state, He was, in fact, the first among the sultans of Delhi who took keen interest in regulating the financial affairs as a matter of state policy By a stroke of the pen, Alauddin Khalji abolished the iqta or zamindari system in the crown lands and by a thrust of his sword, confiscated the jagirs and estates, stopped the practice of issuing grants of land in lieu of state service and abolished the pensions and endowments 'beyond a few thousand tankas' Of course, there are instances to prove that the system of granting lands in lieu of service or Warn could not be given up by Alauddin's government altogether A probability has also been expressed that all assignments were not confiscated but their management was taken over by the government'' There are, however, reasons to believe that Alauddin Khalji did apply the Morton's fork to extract surplus money from his subjects on one pretext or the other Barani's observations on this issue, though full of exaggeration, reveal the truth that Alauddin Khalji took drastic steps to crush the power of the nobility and strengthen the hands of the central government But for the personal factor which lay behind his medieval outlook while talking of 'the state', the measures adopted by him seemed to be progressive,

the success of which could have, ultimately, led to the evolution of a strong and stable central government After having dealt with the nobility and other grandees of the state, Alauddin turned his attention towards the feudatory hindu chieftains, called rais, rawats or thakurs and hereditary hindu landlords, referred to by Barani as the khuts, muqaddams and chaudharies The bulk of the cultivable land, under the sultans of Delhi, was held by the hindu peasant proprietors in their hereditary rights, according to the ancient traditions So also was the case with their semiofficial rural leaders and headmen of the villages—khuts, muqaddams and chaudharies who acted as landlords or intermediaries for the collection of land revenue and other state demands from the village folk It has correctly been said that Alauddin realised the limitations of his power He was a muslim ruler of a non-muslim land and he knew that he could only, govern on principles acceptable to the hindu masses Therefore, the sultan had to leave the hereditary hindu dignitaries and their people to their traditional ways of life

These khuts, muqaddams and chaudharies had, however, enriched themselves at the cost of the peasants as well as the state They charged heavy dues in state demand and their collection fees (khuti) from the former, but paid very little to the exchequer They embezzled the government money, fleeced the tillers of the soil and enjoyed luxurious lives, they 'paid no heed to the revenue officials' Alauddin Khalji adopted a strong policy to remedy the situation He issued two regulations to settle the state demand The first regulation (zabita) adopted measurement of the cultivable land as the principle for determining the land revenue, biswa was declared to be the standared unit of measurement The government demand was

fixed at half of the produce which was to be realised 'without any diminution', and this rule was to apply to khuts (landlords) and balahars (cultivators) without the slightest distinction The second regulation relates to a levy on the cattle A tax for pasturage, at a fixed rate, was levied and demanded 'for every inhabited house, so that no animal, however wretched, could escape the tax', It was made applicable to all the inhabitants rich or, poor, high or low

Alauddin Khalji was the first muslim ruler of Delhi who introduced measurement of land as the basis for the assessment of the state demand—one of the well-established ancient Indian customs Of course, the demand for half of the produce as land revenue was excessive, nevertheless, it was in accordance with the general nature of Alauddin Khalji The sultan deprived the khuts of their special privileges and abolished their khuti—the collection charges They were also put under obligation to pay land revenue and other cesses at the same rate at which the other peasants were taxed Barani's account on this point is not clear but it so appears that the khuts were expected to pay revenue on the land under their personal cultivation only, and not on behalf of or for the other peasants If this is correct, then we conclude that Alauddin Khalji had abolished the zamindari or 'intermediary' status of the khuts, muqaddams and chaudharies, and struck a serious blow to the traditional hindu landed aristocracy Thereafter, they might have continued to hold their hereditary family titles but we are not sure if they also continued to perform their old functions of revenue collection without the receipt of their collection fees This conclusion seems to be correct in the light of a meaningful statement made by Barani in the course of his narrative, he says

> "The same rules for the collection of the tribute (taxes) applied to all alike, and the people were brought to such a state of obedience that one revenue officer would string twenty khuts, muqaddams or chaudharies together by the neck and enforce payment by blows

Alauddin Khalji had a vast revenue establishment, it is probable that some of the old khuts, muqaddams and chaudharies were enrolled as revenue collectors on the new terms and remuneration offered by the state Alauddin enforced strict discipline among the revenue personnel, 'collectors, clerks and other officers employed in revenue matters, who took bribes and acted dishonestly, were dismissed' Barani asserts that,

> "There was no chance of a single tanka being taken dishonestly, or as bribery, from any hindu or mussalman The revenue collectors and officers were so coerced and checked that for five hundred or a thousand tankas, they were imprisoned and kept in chains for years Off times fiscal officers fell into prison and had to endure blows and stripes

Such being the case, Barani's observation is correct that,

> "Men looked upon revenue officers as something, worse than fever Clerkship was a great crime, and no man would give his daughter in marriage to a clerk"

We need not attach much significance to those statements of Barani which impart a communal touch to the fiscal and revenue reforms of Alauddin Khalji He enforced these measures over his subjects irrespective of whether they were hindus or muslims, it is just a coincidence that it were most of the hindus who were affected by his revenue policy,

Price control and market regulations

Alauddin's ambition to expand his kingdom and the anxiety to protect it from the mongol menace prompted him to raise a huge standing army Its dire necessity was felt in 1303 when be was suddenly caught between the two whirlwinds—the prestigious siege of Chittor and the mongol invasion of Delhi Alauddin was successful in the two-pronged struggle but he made up his mind, thereafter, to recruit a permanent army 'not only large, but choice, well-armed with archers, and all ready for immediate service' His soldiers were not an ordinary lot, they were the favoured children of the sultanate, upon whose faithful and efficient service depended the safety of the crown, they were materially rich and lived much more comfortably than the masses Alauddin was confronted with the problem of how to increase the strength of the armed forces on payment of a moderate salary without adversely affecting their standard of living His successful military exploits had already resulted in the excessive flow of gold and silver in the capital and its adjoining towns It led to the rise of prices, and with the increase of armed personnel, the circulation of money in the market and consequent rise of the price level seemed to be a natural corollary This might, in turn, have necessitated increase in the salaries of the soldiers in the, years to come It was apprehended that, in case the sultan was called upon 'to settle a large amount of pay on the army' year after year, the royal treasury, which was full to the brim at that time, would have exhausted within five or six years The sultan was anxious to save the state economy from the vicious circle of inflation and price rise After considerable deliberation, he introduced a salary structure in conformity with a dignified standard of living of the various categories of the soldiers The salary of a foot soldier was fixed at 78 tankas per

annum while a horseman, who was provided with a horse by the state, got double the amount, i e , 156 tankas If the horseman maintained his own horse he was given 78 tankas extra per annum The sultan desired that this salary structure should be made rigid and permanent His 'sagacious advisers' argued that in case 'the necessaries of life could be bought at a low rate, it would be possible 'to maintain a large and permanent army' upon the scales of pay as fixed by the sultan They further that 'the necessaries of life would never become cheap until the price of grain was fixed by regulations and tariffs

Alauddin Khalji, therefore, issued a number of economic regulations to determine the prices of various of life and ensure their regular supply to the people at fixed prices and without any inconvenience The fixation of prices was not done by the sultan arbitrarily, nor was his price structure based on the fluctuating supply and demand, good or bad weather, or the speculative trends of the business community who raised or lowered the prices with motives of making the maximum profits Instead, Alauddin Khalji fixed the price of goods on the progressive Principle of 'production-cost' The first set of eight regulations dealt with corn and cereals The first regulation (zabita) fixed the price per maund of wheat at 7 5 jitals, barley at 4 Jitals, while cereals like mash and nukhud were to sell at 5 jitals and moth at 3 jitals per maund

The land revenue from the khalsa villages was realised in kind (regulation 8) The grain was stored in the state granaries and, during the days of scarcity, sold at the tarriff rates, according to the needs of the people

Alauddin appointed Malik Qabul, an intelligent and trustworthy servant of Ulugh Khan, to be the

controller of all the grain markets, called shahna i mandi He used to go round the markets 'in great state with many horse and foot', and was assisted in the discharge of his functions by a number of deputies and spies Separate markets were set up for each major trade and each market was put under the charge of a shahna who worked in subordination to the chief controller of the markets

All grain carriers (the *caravans*) of the empire were brought into a single corporation (*yak wajud*) under the charge of shahna i mandi The merchants were registered and issued licences to bring grain from the far-off villages, the provincial and local revenue officials helped them in the procurement of grain at fixed rates It was either acquired by the state granaries or sold by the merchants in the open market at the rates dictated by the government, the merchants were allowed to charge a moderate profit plus the cost of carriage over and above their procurement price It is said that the margin of profit, permissible to the merchants was so low that, at the initial stage, some of the caravans did not abide by the government regulations Barani records that the heads of such coravans were brought in chains before the shahna i mandi and kept in confinement 'until they agreed upon one common mode of action and Rave bail for each other The grain carriers were asked to settle along with their families in the villages on the banks of the Jumna so that they might be able to transport grain to various parts of the country under the supervision of the government officials , and prevent the prices from rising above 'the royal standard', As a result, 'so much grain found its way into the markets' that, in normal times, 'it was unnecessary to open the royal stores

The fifth regulation provided for securing the cheapness of grain against regrating—buying and

hoarding of goods with a view to retailing at a profit' This rule was enforced so rigidly that no corn dealer, farmer or anyone else 'could hold back secretly a maund or half a maund of grain' and sell it for a dang or a dirham above the fixed price The regrated grain, if discovered, was forfeited to the state and the regrator was fined

The sultan received the daily reports regarding the market rates and the transactions of goods from three distinct sources—the controllers of the markets, the barids and the munshis If there was any variance in these reports, the defaulters were hauled up by the sultan According to Barani's testimony, the specified scales of prices were maintained as long as Alauddin lived, irrespective of whether the 'rains were abundant or scanty' The unvarying price of Prince in the markets was looked upon as one of the wonders of the time He narrates an incident that, during a season of drought, a junior shahna (not Malik Qabul) of a market, once or twice 'reported that the price of grain had risen half a jital, and he received twenty blows with the stick Firishta observes, however, that

> "The prices remained fixed during this reign, in consequence of a want of water, a dearth ensued, and a difference took place in practice It is difficult to conceive how so extraordinary a project should have been put in practice, without 'defeating its own end Such a plan was neither before ever carried into effect, or (*sic*) has it been tried since, but it is confidently asserted that the orders continued throughout the reign of this monarch"

The eighth regulation provided for the rationing of grain in times of drought or famine A quantity of corn sufficient for the daily supply of each mohalla of the capital was consigned to the local corn dealers

(baqqals) every day from the government stores, and half a maund was allowed to the ordinary purchasers in the markets The people from the adjoining villages also flocked to Delhi to purchase grain at the fixed rates If, in times of scarcity, any poor, reduced person' went to the market and did not get his requirement, the official incharge of the market was taken to task whenever the sultan came to know of it Of course, there were seasons of drought and shortages, but we do not hear of any large scale famine and deaths by starvation during the reign of Alauddin Khalji It must have been made possible only by only wise economic reforms and strict control of the markets by the government 'Barani is fully justified to remark 'this was indeed the wonder of the age, and no other monarch was able to affect it"

The second set of regulations were issued by the sultan for the purpose of securing low prices for cloth and groceries The extensive lawns, which had long been out of use near the Badaun gate of the capital, were converted into an open market, called the Sarai Adal, for the sale and purchase of these commodities A wing of this market was reserved for all transactions in cloth, piece good and garments, it constituted 'the cloth market' which was put under the charge of *rais* parwana (permit officer) All the Indian and foreign merchants, who happened to be in the capital, were required to bring every sort of cloth to this market and sell it at the rates prescribed by the government Like the corn dealers, the cloth merchants were also organised into a corporation, their names were registered in the office of the rais parwana and they had to execute bonds to the effect that they would bring specified quantities of cloth, from wherever they could find, for sale in the capital's market The coarse cloth and garments for common use were sold at the

normal rates based on the production-cost principle *albeit* this was not the case with the superior qualities of cotton cloth, silks and other luxurious wear for the aristocracy There was usually a heavy demand for such commodities in the capital, and the labour involved in their procurement from far off centres of specialised production in Kashmir, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Bengal, entailed heavy expenditure These goods were, therefore, sold at subsidised rates for the benefit of the aristocracy The multani traders, who were experts in cloth trade, were advanced, at one occasion, twenty lakhs of tankas as loan to bring the costly stuff from various parts of the country and sell it in Delhi at less than the procurement price These traders, in a way, acted simply as the commission agents for the government, and all the losses in the transaction were met by the state exchequer, Such being the case, the purchase of these commodities was rationed Permits were issued by the rais parwana to the aristocracy according to their status and purse for the purchase of specified quantities of goods, Firishta states that the export of finer qualities of cloth and silks from the capital was prohibited in order to prevent the crafty businessmen from buying the stuff from Delhi at a low price and selling it at higher rates elsewhere Firishta also has it on record that the people were not permitted to wear superior garments and silks at home, except by special permission from the sultan, 'which favour was only granted to men of rank'

The third set of regulations dealt with the sale and purchase of livestock—the horses and cattle, and the slaves The superior brands of horses, approved for the army, were divided into three grades, their prices were fixed at 100 to 120, 80 to 90, and 65 to 70 tankas for the first, second and third grades respectively An

ordinary pony for common use could, however, be had for 12 to 20 tankas only The government saw to it that the merchants who, brought quality horses from the far off lands, should not sell them to the local dealers wholesale, so that the latter might not charge higher prices from individual customers through second sales or by playing the role of middlemen (dalals) The government issued permits to the local dealers and wealthy persons for the purchase of quality horses, the whole business was transacted it the market specified for the purpose, a periodical review of which was held by the sultan himself Because of their use in the armies, the horses were regarded much more valuable than the homo sapiens, 'many frauds were practised in the sale and purchase of horses' Firishta writes that a number of horse dealers, who defied the government regulations, were either put to death or whipped out of the capital

The cattle—buffaloes, cows, oxen, camels, goats, sheep, and asses, in short, every domesticated animal could be purchased or sold only within the range of prices fixed by the government The mamluk sultans of Delhi had brought with them the practice of enslaving the prisoners of war Alauddin's reign was marked by continuous wars was For imperial conquests and the mongol invasion, therefore, there abundance of slaves, both male and female, in the country who were sold and purchased at nominal prices just like cattle According to Barani, the price of a slave girl was fixed at 5 to 12 tankas and that of a concubine at 20 to 40 tankas A handsome young lad could be had for 20 to 30 tankas where as the price of slave labourers varied from 10 to 15 tankas each With the consumers' goods and domestic labour so cheap, a man of moderate means, say a horsman of Alauddin's army, could afford to enjoy a happy and confortable life with one to four

legally married wives, a number of concubines and a dozen of slave girls and slave labourers at his beck and call

All the general markets of the sultanate, fell within the purveiw of the *diwan i riyasat*—'the ministry of commerce', the office of nazir—the superintendent of weights and measures' constituted a part of it Alauddin Khalji activated this ministry by the appointment of Malik Yakub, the erstwhile nazir, as the *diwan i riyasat*, he was a man of honesty, and integrity, though as an administrator, he was notorious for his severity and ruthlessness All the shahnas of the various markets, including Malik Qabul, the controller of grain markets, and the rais parwana, the incharge of the cloth market of the capital, were put under his charge Thus the diwan i riyasat was made ultimately responsible for the successful implementation of the economic regulations throughout the empire To add more dignity and authority to his exalted office, Yakub was also made the muhtasib 'the censor of public morals The statute provided severe punishments to those who flouted the economic regulations Yakub carried out these punishments like a tyrant and struck terror in the hearts of all those who dared to defy these regulations, All the shahnas were supplied the price lists of major commodities as approved by the central government, while they to have been authorised to fix prices for the unspecified stuff within their own areas of jurisdiction on the same pattern They moved round the markets with a body of horse and whipped the fraudulent shop, keepers publicly Malik Yakub created quite a stir in the markets of the capital where he carried out repeated checks on all the business transactions, he did not spare the buyers or sellers, Indian traders or the foreign caravan leaders, for the minutest

infringement of the law The defaulters were kicked, struck with blows and sticks and flogged in the thickest of the markets The sultan himself took pains to check up through his slave boys and maid servants that the shopkeepers did not cheat 'the poor ignorant people and children by giving them short weights, flesh was, cut off from the haunches of those who resorted to this practice Barani gives a vivid description of this barbaric punishment being inflicted on the shopkeepers by the inspectors on the orders of the sultan, he writes

> "The certainty of this punishment kept the traders honest, and restrained them from giving short weight, and other knavish tricks Nay, they gave good weight, that purchasers often got somewhat in excess

Alauddin Khalji secularised politics and state administration He oppressed the high-ups but provided great relief to the common man During his reign, the prices of goods were low, the food stuffs and other necessaries of life were available easily and in abundance Hoarding, blackmarketing and cheating by the business community and exploitation by middlemen was heard of no more The roads were safe to travel, and the rule of law prevailed in every nook and corner of the sultanate In certain matters of land reforms and socioeconomic policies, Alauddin Khalji anticipated Sher Shah Sur, his administrative set up carried the seeds of a progressive and secular state, which, given the peace and stability for two or three generations more, could have ushered in an era of peace and prosperity, and advanced the progress of the country by at least two centuries

It is an irony of fate that the grand edifice of state-controlled economy, built by Alauddin Khalji on brute force, tumbled down like a house of cards with

the disappearance of that masterly hand, the whole lot of economic regulations died with the sultan almost instantaneously, resulting in the spread of utter confusion and economic anarchy in the country

The credit for the spread of Islam as a political force in the Deccan goes to Alauddin Khalji The first expedition to Deogiri, modern Daulatabad in Maharshtra, was led by him in 1296 when he was a governor of Kara (Allahabad) and Oudh during the reign of Jalaluddin Khalji Barani tells us that before that daring exploit of Alauddin the people of that country (Deogiri) had never heard of the mussalmans, the maratha land had never been punished by the muslim armies, no mussalman king or prince had penetrated so far Deogiri was exceedingly rich in gold and silver, jewels and other valuables In a surpise attack on the maratha kingdom with 8,000 mobile cavalry, Alauddin humbled the pride of raja Ramchandra Deva and extracted from him a huge war indemnity, besides the promise to pay the revenues of Ellichpur region as tribute year after year He returned to Kara, laden with booty, which included 600 maunds of gold, 1000 maunds of silver, seven maunds of pearls, two maunds of diamonds, rubies and other precious stones, and 4,000 pieces of silk-stuff besides horses, elephants and slaves The success of his enterprise, resulting in the acquisition of huge wealth, turned the head of the youthful and *ambitious prince who, soon afterwards, murdered his uncle and usurped the throne Deogiri's gold enabled him to acquire the throne, it inspired him to transform his kingdom into an all India empire The conquest of the Deccan constituted but an indispensable part of his imperial policy Deogiri to Alauddin Khalji was a gateway to the treasure-trove of the legendary 'forty thieves' and the sultan was ever eager to possess the

treasure by playing the role of Ali Baba In the opinion of the author, it was Alauddin's dream of possessing the wealth of the Deccan which turned that ambitious youth into a great imperialist, and the conquest of Rajputana and central India simply enabled him to bridge the gulf between Delhi and the Vindhyas The conquest of the Deccan was foremost in his mind ever since he secured the crown Therefore, while the conquest of northern India was progressing satisfactorily, Alauddin was in touch with all the developments that had been taking place in the south Long before he launched a full-fledged campaign for the conquest of the Deccan, he had educated himself with the knowledge of its topography ascertained the routes leading to the principal towns and acquired intelligence 'about the military prowess and treasures of the hindu adversaries who sat on the thrones of the southern kingdoms Besides Ramchandra Deva of Devagiri, there were three other prominent kings of the south—Pratap Rudra Deva I I of the Kakatiya dynasty had his headquarters at Warrangal (Telegana), Vir Ballala III of the Hoysalas at Dwarsamudra, and Kulashekhar Pandya of the far south at Madura These rulers, like the rajput ' chieftains of northern India, did not see eye to eye with each other They being devoid of a good neighbourly sense, constantly engaged themselves in mutual feuds and self-destructive fratricidal wars It was therefore, not very difficult to knock them down one by one

Rajputana and Malwa had been conquered, all the routes leading to the south secured by Alauddin Khalji by the year 1305 The mongol invasions had been beaten off by him with a firm hand Alauddin's 4,75,000 well-equipped standing army had to be usefully employed if it was to be kept under effective

control A wholesale invasion of the Deccan, therefore lay in the logic of history A few immediate considerations helped in the materialisation of the Deccan campaigns in 13067 Alauddin's extensive economic reforms, the vast expansion of the administration and the practice of paying salaries in cash to the soldiers as well as bureaucracy increased the demand for gold and silver, the desire to secure the precious metals from the south, therefore, became a dire necessity to replenish the state treasury and lubricate the war machine To all these factors were added a couple of plausible excuses to initiate a military campaign by Alauddin Khalji against Ramchandra Deva of Devagiri in 13067 He called back surplus contingents of soldiers from the northwestern frontier and constituted, them into 'an army of the Deccan' under the command of Malik Kafur, a brilliant hindu slave from Gujarat, who had fallen into the hands of slave traders in his childhood and castrated, he had by then come to occupy the exalted office of the malik naib, the deputy sultan' He was destined to conquer the whole of south India under the direction and control of Alauddin Khalji Ramchandra suffered defeat and sued for peace, he gave one of his daughters in marriage to Alauddin Khalji and acknowledged his vassalage According to Barani, 'the Rai was, ever afterwards obedient, and sent his tribute regularly as long as he lived He collaborated wholeheartedly with the imperial armies in the conquest of south India The matrimonial relationship established between the ruling houses of Delhi and Devagiri crossed the religious barriers, Ramchandra became a part and parcel of the imperial power of India and rendered maximum assistance to Alauddin Khalji in the expansion of his imperial sway over the south This relationship is interpreted differently by different critics It is held that Alauddin's policy towards

Ramchandra was based on political expediency, as a clever politician and diplomat, Alauddin won over the loyalty of the Yadav chief and then used him as a tool in the fulfilment of his aggressive designs According to some critics, Ramchandra was a coward who compromised his independence, honour and self-respect in order to preserve his throne and the other material gains Not only this, having disgraced himself, he shamelessly helped the aggressors in trampling the whole of southern India under their heels Ramchandra let down his own people, disgraced his religion and did incalculable harm to his own society and culture, of which he was expected to champion the cause. His cowardly conduct had a highly demoralising effect on the hindus of south India, in general, and their rulers, in particular

In 1309-10, Malik Kafur led a second 'army of Islam', comprising a hundred thousand soldiers, now for the conquest of Warrangal The imperial army marched through Devagiri and Ramchandra Deva rendered every type of assistance to it, He entertained Malik Kafur and other imperial nobles with great hospitality, provided fodder for the animals and provisions for the soldiers While the army was marching through his territories, he remained continuously in attendance upon Malik Kafur and met with ill the commissariat requirements of the invader, he ordered his merchants to set up bazars all along the route of the army with, strict instructions to sell everything according to the sultan's established prices in his dominions Ramchandra deputed his scouts to guide the imperial army *en route* to Warrangal As soon as Kafur reached the frontiers of Telingana, he issued orders to lay waste the country with fire and sword According to Firishta, this confounded the inhabitants who had never injured their wanton

enemies The invaders met with resistance at the fort of Sirpur manned by a small contingent of the hindu soldiers, All of its defenders died in action while their ladies, along with their children, perished in the self-lit fire of Jauhar After a brief but deadly struggle, Rai Pratap Rudra Deva 11 purchased peace by surrendering 100 elephants, 7,000 horses and an immense treasure of gold, silver and jewels of incalculable value, it included the famous jauhar—later called the *Koh i Noor* The Rai did not meet Malik Kafur albeit he sent his man-size statue, made of gold, with a golden chain round its neck in acknowledgement of his submission, he also promised in writing to send the annual tribute to the imperial court regularly Laden with booty, Malik Kafur returned to Delhi on June H 13 10 to the great delight of Alauddin Khalji

Flushed with the joy of an easy victory at Warrangal, Alauddin Khalji became impatient to spread his imperial sawy over the whole of the southern peninsula without much loss of time Malik Kafur was even more enthusiastic than his master for the enterprising campaign, within four months of his return from Warrangal he was ready for his third expedition to the south The trigger-happy Soldiers vied with one another in getting themselves listed in the army of Islam' for jehad against the infidels, the memories of the times of Mahmud of Ghazni were revived The terms like slam and jehad were, however, used in a most casual manner, as a matter of fact, everyone from the sultan to the rank and file, was tempted only by the glamour of loot and plunder The expedition was originally directed against the kingdom of Dwarsamudra but the sultan set the guidelines of the campaign only, Malik Kafur was allowed ample discretion to execute it in any way he thought fit The

imperial army left Delhi in November 1310 and was accorded reception by Ramchandra of Devagiri in February 1311 As usual, he provided all the facilities for its onward march into the kingdom of Dwarsamudra The Hoysala ruler Vir Ballala III was terrified into submission after a brief show of resistance, he surrendered his elephants horses and the treasure and offered to pay the annual tribute to Delhi

It was at Dwarsamudra that Malik Kafur learnt about the outbreak of a fratricidal war between the two Pandya princes in the far south Kulashekhar, the Pandya ruler of Madura, was inclined more favourably towards his elder but natural son Vir Pandya and this excited the jealousies of his younger but legitimate son Sunder Pandya Sunder murdered his father and claimed the throne for himself but was turned out of Madura Vir Pandya, Hard-pressed, Sunder Pandya appealed to Malik kafur, who was then stationed at Dwarsamudra, for help This provided a golden opportunity to the latter to lead a contingent of the imperial troops into the far south He was faithfully assisted by Vir Ballala III in this enterprise Vir Pandya fled the capital on the approach of the imperial army which overran the Pandya kingdom, apparently in search of the fugitive prince, and plundered all the important towns and temple" that fell its way Having realised his folly, though very late, Sunder Pandva also left the imperialists and fled to the jungles According, to Firishta, Malik Kafur reached as far as Rameshwaram where he erected a mosque in honour of the victory of Islam Nevertheless, both of the Pandya princes eluded him and none made a formal treaty of surrender, nor recognised the paramountcy of Alauddin Khalji over the dominions of Madura The campaign proved, however, most fruitful from the

point of view of material gains Malik Kafur returned to Delhi on October 18,1311, with 612 elephants, 96,000 maunds of gold, 20,000 horses and several chests of precious stores of incalculable value, Amir Khusrau gives the weight of Jewels and pearls at 500 maunds As a matter of fact, the booty from Dwarsamudra and Madura defied all description and estimates in terms of its monetary value, Alauddin's lifelong acquisitions, including the spoils of Devagiri, paled into insignificance before it It may well have turned Mahmud of Ghazni in his grave 'with wistful' eyes Vir Ballala III accompanied Malik Kafur to Delhi and received a very generous treatment from Alauddin Khalji, after Ramchandra Deva, he became the second most useful and obedient vassal of the sultanate in the south But for the active collaboration of the hindu chieftains and their feudal nobility, the conquest of the Deccan might not have been accomplished by Alauddin Khalji during his lifetime The hindu civilisation and culture of southern India fell a victim to the rising tide of Islam for which none else but their own ruling elite or the indigenous sociopolitical leaders were primarily responsible There is no denying the fact that Alauddin Khalji played a very significant role in the spread of Islam in south India as a political as well as social force, with the active assistance of hindu feudal lords and the selfish leadership of the indigenous population Betrayed by their selfish and coward sociopolitical leaders, the stupefied and helpless hindu masses could do nothing else but offer abject surrender to the victors and curse their fate or evil stars that had brought about the ruin of their much-cherished religion,, and cultural heritage

The establishment of the Tughluq dynasty at Delhi in 1320 marks a further development in the internal social organisation of the muslims Like the

Khaljis, the tughluqs also belonged to the non-privileged section of the turkish founders of the sultanate

They constituted an offshoot of the qarauna tribe of the turks who lived in the mountainous region, lying between Sind and Turkistan, the term qarauna was used, during that age, for the people of a mixed race—the descendants of mongol or turkish fathers and non-turkish mothers Ghiasuddin Tughluq, the founder of the new dynasty, checked the political anarchy which had engulfed the sultanate after the death of Alauddin Khalji The discipline, efficiency and integrity of the civil services of Alauddin's days could not be restored, nevertheless, Ghiasuddin improved the general tone of administration by imparting to it a bit of soldier's touch, and the police and judicial arrangements made by him won applause from all quarters

The sudden collapse of Alauddin's economic regulations had adverse effects on agricultural production and public economy Ghiasuddin Tughluq attempted to restore economic order and increase agricultural production in his own way The progressive land revenue system, initiated by Alauddin Khalji had already been discarded by his son and successor Mubarak Shah Kbalji (1316-20), it was given a formal burial by Ghiasuddin Tughluq who gave up the measurement of land as the basis for the assessment of government demand The extensive revenue establishment of Alauddin's regime was simply unintelligible to him , its staff was reduced and survey of land became a forgotten story Nevertheless, Ghiasuddin Tughluq took keen interest in the extension of agriculture by encouraging the cultivators to bring the unreclaimed lands under the plough and repopulate the deserted villages The state demand was reduced n a principle laid that the land revenue

should not be enhanced whether upon the reports of informers or the statements of valuers by more than one-eleventh of the estimated produce at a time The sultan was conscious of the fact that countries are ruined, and are kept in poverty by excessive taxation and the exorbitant demands of kings The oppressive methods adopted by Alauddin Khalji for the collection of revenue were given up, on the hand, the revenue officials were issued instructions that

> "The revenue should be collected in such a way that 'the raiyats should increase their cultivation, that the lands already in cultivation might be kept so, and some little be added to them every year So much was not to be exacted at once that the cultivation should fall off and no increase be made in futurefuture "

Ghiasuddin Tughluq took interest in the coustraction canals, for irrigation, the peasants were given relief in times of drought The sympathetic attitude of the sultan towards the cultivators helped in the rehabilitation of the countryside and' increased agricultural production

Policies and Projects of Muhammad bin Tughluq

Muhammad bin Tughluq, the eldest son and successor of Ghiasuddin Tughluq, was the most highly educated of all' the preceding sultans of Delhi A scholar of Persian-and Arabic, he was well-read in the subjects of astronomy, philosophy, mathematics, medicine and logic He was a man of high moral character who left nothing to be desired from the point of view of and intellectual attainments His reign started with everything in his favour He succeeded a capable monarch who had enjoyed the confidence of his people He inherited a vast empire from his illustrious father, to the consolidation of which he had personally made

substantial contribution Peace and tranquillity prevailed in the sultanate, the distant provinces were under the effective control of the centre, and the royal treasury was full to the brim With these assets, the youthful and energetic monarch was expected to do better than the earlier sultans of Delhi

Muhammad bin Tughluq was fully conscious of the supreme powers and resources wielded by him, he was rather over confident of his capabilities to make the best use of these as a sovereign He was an abstract thinker and an innovator in the field of state polity albeit he was an idealist, and not a practical statesman, therefore, the radical changes brought about by him in the state policy foundered against the rocks of improbability Like Alauddin Khalji, he was a great imperialist who was eager to extend his sway over the whole of the Indian subcontinent He believed in the geopolitical entity of India and the oneness of its people, and had a clear concept about the political unity of the country Muhammad bin Tughluq wanted to break the barriers between the north and the south, and stood for the extension of direct administrative control of the central government over all parts of India by eliminating the regional states and feudal principalities He threw open higher services to all the Indians on merit and did not discriminate between the hindus and the muslims in matters of state policy In his political outlook, Muhammad bin Tughluq was unique among the sultans of Delhi, he was definitely a man with ideas far ahead of his times Accordingly, Muhammad bin Tughluq has been 'represented by contemporaries as one of the wonders of the age in which he lived' Of all the sultans of Delhi, he is perhaps the most grossly misunderstood monarch, His lofty designs and ambitious projects were beyond the comprehension of the bureaucracy as well as the

subjects Barani, Ibn Baltuta and Isami could not understand him either, no wonder, they took a prejudicial view of his character and administrative policies Barani was, in fact, so much obsessed with the five ambitious projects of Muhammad bin Tughluq that he did not care to give a systematic narrative of his reign in chronological order Again, instead of tracing the genesis of these projects and giving the analysis of the causes leading to their failure, he dwells on their disastrous effects by giving, an exaggerated account of the sufferings of the people and the ruthless persecutions of the sultan So also is the case with the chronicles of Ibn Battuta and Isami As a matter of fact, the so-called 'hair-brain schemes' of Muhammad bin Tughluq carried the rudiments of modernity and national integration albeit he failed to convince his people of their significance, and himself lacked the skill to implement them for the benefit of the people The period of rule of Muhammad bin Tughluq constitutes, therefore, one of the most tragic chapters in the history of early medieval India, it is a sad commentary on the well-intentioned but incompetent monarch, and corrupt, selfish and short-sighted bureaucracy who were called upon to rule the unimaginative and backward masses Three of his great projects, viz, the transfer of capital to Devagiri, token currency, and the taxation in the Doab, had a direct bearing on the social and economic life of the people, a detailed account of which would be quite appropriate in this study

Transfer of the Capital

The first grand project, conceived by Muhammad bin Tughluq, was to transfer his capital from Delhi to Devagiri, which was renamed Daulatabad What was foremost in the mind of the sultan, when be thought of such a move, cannot be ascertained from the

contemporary sources It is, however, a fact that Muhammad bin Tughluq, while a crown prince, had formed close associations, with the Deccan He led two expeditions to Warrangal and, after his hard-earned victory, annexed the hindu kingdom to the sultanate But for the keen interest taken by Ghiasuddin Tughluq and the victory scored by Jauna Khan, the whole of southern peninsula might have slipped out of the control of the newly established Tughluq dynasty, After his accession to the throne, Muhammad bin Tughluq faced the first revolt at the hands of Bahauddin in Gurshasp, governor of Sagar, who had developed contacts with some hindu feudal chiefs of the Deccan

The sultan was constrained to shift his headquarters temporarily to Devagiri which had already, been brought under the direct civil administrative control of the sultanate since the concluding days of Alauddin Kbalji A little carelessness or weakness on the part of Muhammad bin Tughluq in dealing with the revolt of Gurshasp could have triggered off rebellions in other parts of the peninsula, With this background in view, we can enumerate the plausible considerations which might have led Muhammad bin Tughluq to transfer his capital Daulatabad The sultan was a man of ideas who did not hesitate to break with old traditions and conventions in state craft and civil administration As a great visionary, he believed in the political unity of the Indian subcontinent and desired to bring the entire country under the effective control of a central authority He wished the sultanate to play this grandiose role as a unifying force Delhi was situated far away from the south which tempted the feudal chieftains and governors of the sultans to defy the imperial authority His first Warrangal expedition

(1321-22) had failed simply because of the fact that his communications with Delhi were cut off for a couple of weeks which resulted in the spread of rumours and disaffection among his soldiers Muhammad bin Tughluq did not want such a mishap to be repeated again Since the conquest of southern India by Malik Kafur under Alauddin Khalji and the inflow of its wealth, lubricating the wheels of the sultanate, the centre of gravity of the Indian politics had definitely shifted to the south

Muhammad bin Tughluq attached greater importance to his southern possessions than the Punjab and Sind which had been ravaged by a century of mongol inroads Muhammad bin Tughluq was eager to utilise the immense gold, silver, precious stones and untapped resources of the south to enrich the sultanate While at Devagiri, he was fascinated with the pleasant climate, rich agricultural products and flourishing trade and commerce of Maharashtra where his stay must have been made much more corn fortable than at Delhi by the hospitality of the maratha officials of the sultanate Barani offers' the only explanation in support of the sultan's project that Daulatabad held a central situation' Firishta, though writing long afterwards, makes an observation

> "The king was so much pleased with the situation and strength of Dewgur (Devagiri or Daulatabad) and considered it so much more centrical than Delhi that he determined to make it his capital "

Daulatabad was in no way situated in the heart of Muhammad bin Tughluq's empire, it was not equidistant from the northwestern, eastern and southern boundaries of the sultanate It the sultan attributed a 'central' position to Devagiri, it could be justified only when he attached little importance to his

dominions, situated to the cast and northwest of Delhi Of course, Delhi being located close to the northwestern frontier of India, was frequently exposed to the foreign invasion whereas Devagiri was free from this menace, the latter enjoyed a more strategic location and could be defended better We need not believe Ibn Battuta when he says that sultan wanted to punish the people of Delhi because they used to write anonymous letters full of abuse to him Similarly, Isami's contention that the sultan distrusted the people of Delhi and wanted to break their power by uprooting them from their hearths and homes, is not very convincing unless we define the people to be the nobility or aristocracy of the capital The political environment of Delhi in the beginning of Muhammad bin Tughluq's reign does not warrant such an inference

A modern historiographer, on the testimony of Siyarul Auliya, opines that Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq intended to solve the Deccan problem by making Devagiri 'a centre of muslim culture through the plantation of a colony of the mussalmans' there, he observes

> "One of the factors controlling the situation in the Deccan was the scarcity of the mussalmans a fact which made it so tempting to the hindu rulers to revolt, and so difficult for the emperor of Delhi immediately to control the situation from so great a distance At the slightest outbreak of trouble in any part of the Deccan, either a capable general had to be sent from Delhi or the emperor himself had to march in person "

The argument does not stand the test of historical investigation It was no hindu chief but a prominent muslim noble Bahauddin Gurshasp who, instead of championing the cause of Islamic unity on behalf of

the sultanate, had raised the first standard of revolt against Muhammad bin Tughluq The feudal hindu chiefs and ambitious muslim nobles stood at par with one another in the matter of defying the authority of an autocratic police state that the sultanate of Delhi was Muhammad bin Tughluq was not a communalist but an imperialist with a clearer political vision than what was possessed by the other sultans of Delhi His failure as a ruler need not distract us from the real aims and objects that underlay his Deccan policy The increase in the numerical strength of muslims and the spread of Islamic culture in the south were the indirect results of his move which was political in nature

Firishta has it on record that 'on proposing this subject to his ministers, the majority were of the opinion that Oojein (Ujjain) was a more proper place for that purpose' As an autocrat and self-willed ruler, however, Muhammad bin Tughluq brushed aside the advice of his ministers and without carefully looking into the advantages and disadvantages on every side' decided to transfer the capital to Daulatabad No wonder, he had to pay a heavy price for having disregarded the advice of the counsellors

The 'exodus' to Daulatabad took place in two phases At first the imperial court and establishment shifted to the new, capital The nobles moved out grudgingly while the cream of the aristocracy, comprising the sayyad, sheikhs, ulama, traders and businessmen showed disinclination to vacate the historic city of Delhi 'which for 170 or 180 years had grown in prosperity and rivalled Baghdad and Cairo' This enraged the sultan who issued, orders for the general migration of the aristocracy of Delhi to Daulatabad, the incident took place about a year after the first phase of migration, Isami says that six caravans were composed of the people who were forced

to move to the Daccan against their will 'The step was deeply resented by the aristocracy and made the sultan an object of hatred and despise by all and sundry It was not, however, a mass migration of the populace of Delhi, the hindus, in genera), were not affected by it nor were the muslim masses compelled to take the road to the south It were essentially the upper classes of Delhi who fell a victim to the whims of the despotic ruler, they were uprooted from their ancestral land, many suffered great hardships and some were actually ruined Coercion was employed against those who disobeyed the sultan's orders, some were mercilessly" dragged out of their homes and punished However, the harrowing tales of mass migration as narrated by Barani, Ibn Battuta, and Isami are not literally correct, these became current among the people as an expression of the sentiments of resentment and disgust against the high handed action or the sultan

Once the decision had been taken, the sultan made elaborate arrangements to execute the plan The seven hundred mile long trunk road (shahrah) between Delhi and Devagiri had already been well developed since the days of Alauddin Khalji Halting camps were set up all along the route for the stay of the emigrants where free food, drinking water and other amenities were made available for them An efficient postal and intelligence service was established and state troops posted en route to Daulatabad to protect the life and property of the travellers Ibn Battuta reveals that the sultan had purchased all the houses and dwellings of those who were asked to shift to the south, they were provided free board and lodging on arrival in Daulatabad and granted free land and other facilities for the construction of their houses and business concerns Barani has it that the sultan was bounteous

in his liberality and favours to the emigrants, both on their journey and on their arrival at Daulatabad Notwithstanding all that the sultan had done to help the emigrants, they suffered tremendously from severe mental strain, privation and fatigue

Daulatabad did not prove ail ideal capital for the vast turkish empire of India Delhi as the imperial capital did have some shortcomings, and the original idea of locating a more centrally situated headquarters was not illogical, albeit the choice of Devagiri was wrong It did not fulfil the requirements which necessitated this change Being situated far away from the northwestern frontier and Bengal, it could not serve as air adequate base for the establishment of ail effective control over northwestern and eastern India To his real chagrin, Muhammad bin Tughluq had to move like a shuttle-cock between Delhi and Daulatabad to solve the various administrative alive and political problems

The historic importance of Delhi could not be reduced by an executive action alone Delhi was associated with the foundation of the sultanate, and it had enjoyed the reputation as its metropolis throughout the muslim world for over two centuries Muhammad bin Tughluq realised this bitter truth only after he had shifted to Daulatabad Moreover, in spite of the liberal patronage extended by the sultan to the emigrants, many of them did not feel at home in the south, their emotional and sentimental attachment with Delhi could not be cut off They felt themselves as strangers in 'an infidel land' and continued to grumble against the sultan who had lost their confidence and goodwill, they came to constitute a permanently disgruntled and disaffected lot who did not cooperate with the sultan willingly and sincerely in the management of the state affairs It had an adverse

effect on the administration, and it gave a serious setback to the dignity and prestige of the sultan Within two or three years, Muhammad bin Tughluq realised his folly and brought back the imperial court to Delhi without any fanfare General permission was granted to the emigrants to come back to Delhi in 133536 but much before that stage Delhi had already become the hub of political and sociocultural activities of the sultanate once again Ibn Battuta who came to Delhi in 1334 found it in a fairly flourishing condition

Abbas, the author of *Masalik ul Absar*, an arabic work, compiled about a decade after the so-called evacuation and destruction of Delhi, mentions that the sultanate of Delhi had two capitals—Delhi and Devagiri or Qabbatul Islam—the metropolis of Islam' The two cities were connected with each other Whenever something special happened in a city or when the gates of the capital where the sultan was not present, were opened in the morning and closed at night, the drums were beaten in rapid succession from posting station to posting station In this manner, the sultan came to know every day the time of opening and closing of the gates of the capital lying at a distance of about seven hundred miles from his place of residence Similarly, the recent discovery of a couple of coins, minted almost simultaneously at Delhi and Daulatabad, carry the inscriptions on them as *Takhtgah i Delhi* and *Takhtgah i Daulatabad* respectively Such being the case, we have reasons to believe that the unprecedented project conceived by Muhammad bin Tughluq was not scrapped altogether The original plan misfired and was universally condemned by the people essentially because of its dictatorial implementation, the sultan crippled a wise project by its hasty implementation and the use of brute force thereafter Notwithstanding the personal

and autocratic element which constituted but a part of the general nature of medieval Indian monarchical hierarchy, the importance of Daulatabad as the second headquarters of the empire was confirmed by experience, and the original plan was modified to suit the exigencies of the times The ancient Indian monarchs did have more than one capital to control their vast Indian dominions Considered from this angle, Muhammad bin Tughluq made a great contribution to the concept of medieval Indian polity, and anticipated the British who started with Calcutta as the capital, situated on the eastern fringe of the country, and subsequently developed Simla to be the second headquarters of their Indian empire

The immediate effect of Muhammad bin Tughluq's transfer of the capital was disastrous It reduced the prestige and prosperity of Delhi though for a shortwhile The aristocracy of Delhi were uprooted from their hearths and homes and many of them put to great inconvenience The execution of the plan must have put a tremendous strain on the administrative machinery as well as the state treasury The sultan lost respect in the estimation of the people and could never win back their confidence all his life The bad execution of the project therefore resulted in the greatest personal loss to the sultan The long-range effects of his experiment proved, however, to be marvellous The socio-cultural barriers between the north and the south were broken A large number of the muslim elite migrated to the south and made permanent settlement there, they received lucrative government assignments, free land and estates and gradually came to acquire a dominant position among the aristocracy of the Deccan The propagation of Islam among the indigenous population received impetus and the numerical strength of the muslims beyond the

Vindhyas increased considerably Thus the Deccan became a stronghold of the muslims Whether Muhammad bin Tughluq originally conceived it or not, he became indirectly responsible for plantation of the muslim faith and Islamic culture in the south It would not be wrong to say that Alauddin Kbalji had carried the muslim arms to the south whereas Muhammad bin Tughluq installed the banner of Islamic religion and culture there The initial project of the sultan failed and, in the long run, he lost his hold over the southern dominions, but the Deccan continued to be the stronghold of muslim power, it led to the birth of the Bahmani kingdom during the very lifetime of Muhammad bin Tughluq

Introduction of token currency was the second unprecedented project launched by Muhammad bin Tughluq That it is esssentially a modern concept does not need much elaboration, we live in the age of token currency where the mere contemplation of the intrinsic value of paper notes and coins may be dubbed idiotic Muhammad bin Tughluq, on the other hand, earned the nickname of a fool' because he conceived of such an advanced measure to revolutionise the Indian economy in the fourteenth century He has been described by Edward Thomas as 'the prince of moneyers Soon after accession, he made sweeping reforms in the system of coinage He fixed the relative values of the precious metals and issued various types of coins with the object of facilitating exchange and circulation The introduction of token currency was, however, his most significant innovation in the history of medieval India coinage Like Kublai Khan (1260-94) of China and Gai Khatu (1293 A D) of Persia, Muhammad bin Tughluq issued orders that tankas of bronze be minted and used for and at par with the silver tankas

Various reasons have been forwarded by different

writers, contemporary as well as modern, for this novel experiment of Muhammad bin Tughluq The underlying theme of Barani's account is that the financial stringency of the state had compelled the sultan to take this step There may be some truth in it, but Barani's statement that, on account of the failure of his taxation policy in the Doab and the subsequent famine in northern India, the state treasury was emptied, is wrong, In reality, the Doab episode (1335-36) had taken place after the failure of the experiment in token currency (1330-32) The fact that the sultan had subsequently paid back to the public, gold and silver coins in return for the token currency and managed a most difficult situation with astonishing success, leads us to the conclusion that the financial difficulty was not the reason for the introduction of token currency, on the other hand, the failure of the experiment must have resulted in the financial bankruptcy of the state

Though Muhammad bin Tughluq had inherited a well-filled treasury from his father, he was always anxious to find out new ways and means of improving the financial condition of the state Firishta rightly tells us that the sultan introduced token currency because he wished to augment his resources in order to carry into effect his wild plans of conquest and administrative reforms which appealed so powerfully to his ambitious nature Ishwara Topa was probably the first among the modern historiographers to infer that the shortage of silver was the most important reason for this measure In medieval India silver was most extensively used for coinage, the gold coins were not very common The increasing trade and commerce and the vast dimensions or the Tughluq empire increased the demand for silver The disbursement of incalculable amounts of silver coins to the imperial

armies and civil services created a problem similar to that which Alauddin Khalji had also to face once The latter had met it by lowering the salaries of the soldiers and controlling the prices of the commodities Muhammad bin Tughluq did not want, however, to revive the Khalji horror He met the problem of the scarcity of silver by three methods First, he raised the price of silver in relation to gold The relative value of gold and silver was reduced to the ratio of seven to one instead of ten to one which generally prevailed during the reigns of his predecessors, Second, he increased the weight of gold coins and reduced that of the silver ones Under Alauddin Khalji, gold and silver tankas weighed 175 grains each, Muhammad bin Tughluq introduced in their place, gold dinar of 200 grains and silver adalit of 144 grains It clearly shows that, as compared with gold, there was relative scarcity of silver in the country under Muhammad bin Tugbluq's reign, Third, in order to compensate for the shortage or silver, he started token currency which was to be treated at par with silver currency Above all, Muhammad bin Tughluq possessed originality of thought and loved experimenatation He wanted to open a new chapter in the history of coinage in India He was fully aware of the success of token currency in China and decided to try the experiment without the slightest intention of defrauding or cheating his own subjects as alleged by the contemporary writers

Muhammad bin Tughluq made the bronze coins as the legal tender in about 1330 A D , and put them at par, in value, with the silver coins The fundamental principle of his token currency was the same as that of the modern paper and metallic currency The intrinsic value of the bronze coins was insignificant but they were issued on government credit The scheme was 'on the whole quite good and statesmanlike' but bad

execution led to its failure in spite of the best intentions of the sultan Unfortunately, Muhammad bin Tughluq did not take steps to make the mint the monopoly of the state nor there was any elaborate machinery to prepare the standard coins Any goldsmith could produce as good a coin as the royal token Edward Thomas observes that,

> "There was no special machinery to make the difference of the fabric of the royal mint and the handiwork of the moderately skilled artisan Unlike the precautions taken to prevent the imitation of the Chinese paper notes, there was positively no check on the authenticity or the copper token, and no limit to the power of production by the masses at large"

Barani does not exaggerate the point when be says that the 'house of every hindu was turned into a mint', and the people, including muslims, of course, began to forge the coins on an extensive scale They 'turned their utensils into coins and with these they paid their tribute (taxes) and with these they purchased horses, arms and fine things of all kinds, The rais, the village headman and landowners grew rich and strong upon these copper coins but the state was impoverished Every goldsmith struck copper coins in his workshop, and the treasury with these copper coins ' Foreign merchants purchased Indian goods with the token currency in vogue but refused to accept the latter while selling their goods, it led to the spread of confusion and discontent in the country The people held back gold and silver coins and, at the same time, hesitated in dealing with token coins which were not valued more than pebbles or potsherds Barani states that the coins of gold and silver, because of 'great scarcity, rose fourfold and fivefold in value Trade was interrupted on every side and all transactions in

money came to a standstill Never was so wise a measure of reform so cruelly frustrated than this experiment in token currency The sultan was compelled to order for the withdrawal of token currency after it had been in use for about two years (1310-32) He recalled all the token coins, exchanging each for the silver one, the people got gold and silver in exchange for all such coins whether genuine or forged Barani writes

> "So many of these copper tankas were brought to the treasury that heaps of them rose up in Tughluqabad like mountains Great sums went out of the treasury in exchange for the copper, and a great deficiency was caused When the sultan found that his project had failed, and that great loss had been entailed upon the treasury through his copper coins, he more than ever turned against his subjects"

Thus the discredited token currency having been recalled, all forgery stopped and the credit of the government restored The storm blew over, the panic ended and the people grew rich at the cost of the state so much so that not even 'a murmur' about the affair was heard by Ibn Battuta who came to India shortly afterwards Abbas, the author of the Masalik ul Absar, also knew nothing about it The above-mentioned statement of Barani, however, needs a comment, it contradicts his earlier observation that Muhammad bin Tughluq 'had adopted token currency to refill his empty treasury Had that been the case, he could not have afforded to buy back token coins, including millions of the forged ones, in exchange for gold and silver As a matter of fact, the sultan displayed a rare type of patience, courage and sportsman's spirit in winding up a project which had failed not only because of bad execution by the state but also because of the dishonesty of his people He was full of remorse for

having mishandled a wisely conceived project and readily atoned for the acts of omission and commission of his subjects too The whole episode is a sad commentary on the incompetence of the ruler and irresponsible conduct of his subjects, both the parties were equally to blame

In addition to the well-known causes, such as forgery by the people, the absence of any elaborate machinery to prepare standard coins, the sultan's failure to monopolise the mint or stop the forgery by devising special methods for the detection of the forged coins, and the corruption of the state official,, who were most probably in league with the malcontents, some other important factors were also responsible for the failure of the measure, Token currency, for its success, requires the permanent credit of the government, In medieval India, the muslim dynasties were always changing The people could not hope that the successors of Muhammad bin, Tughluq or the subsequent rulers of the new dynasties would ever accept these token coins as legal tender Second, there was already an abundance of fractional currency of copper Jitals, etc, the people accepted it because its exchange value was not very high The token currency was, however, to be treated at par with the silver currency The illiterate and unimaginative masses could not under stand the difference between the two and were simply confused They thought that the sultan intended to rob them Third, there being no understanding or agreement with foreign governments regarding the exchange value of the token currency, the foreign merchants were in the right when they refused to accept bronze coins in their business transactions No other state, whether in India or abroad, would have shown any consideration for the token currency of Muhammad bin Tughlug in those

days Last but not least, the price of metals depended on the law of supply and demand, and could not be fixed by royal enactments The sultan roused discontent by disregarding this law in raising the price of silver of his own sweet will Muhammad bin Tughluq's measure of token currency was much in advance of the age , under the circumstances, it was bound to fail and it is not surprising that it did miserably

The failure of the above-mentioned projects as also that of the military expeditions had disastrous effects on the finances of the state The royal treasury was almost emptied and wealth 'which is the true source of political power', according to Barani, 'was expended ' The sultan, in desperation, was compelled to think of new ways and means for increasing the revenues of the state, he launched his last major project pertaining to the enhancement of taxation in the Doab' This measure also ended in smoke and had catastrophic effects on the fortunes of the tughluq empire

Muhammad bin Tughluq had started taking interest in the revenue administration of the state from the very beginning of his reign Like his father he stood for the extension of agriculture and adopted a liberal attitude towards the cultivators He introduced a register of the revenue and expenditure of the provinces in which the financial resources and liabilities of each *iqta* were shown separately It was perhaps intended to introduce a uniform revenue policy throughout the sultanate on the basis of the information gathered from this register We, however, do not know of any valuable reform made by him in the land revenue administration The measurement of land and the rational assessment of the government demand were never contemplated Nevertheless, the

sultan is said to have made one brief experiment for the reclamation of the barren land and improvement of agricultural produce through rotation of crops, For this purpose, he created a department of agriculture, styled diwan i kohi, which was managed by agricultural experts and officials of the revenue establishment in collaboration with the cultivators. A tract of land, about sixty miles square in area, was entrusted to it for experimentation and an investment of seventy lakhs of tankas was made on it over a period of two years. The cultivators as well as the bureaucracy of his day failed, however, to appreciate the true value of such a scientific approach to the problem of agricultural growth, the corrupt officials misappropriated the funds and the agriculturists did not apply their brains to break the old tradition in the pattern of cultivations. The department was wound up after three years, this was too short a period for such an experiment to produce any tangible results, of course. No more is heard of the sultan's interest in the improvement of agriculture or reform of the revenue administration thereafter, the enhancement of taxation in the Doab had nothing to do with that type of creative urge in him. It is not appropriate either to give it the name of 'a project'. The sultan was anxious to replenish the empty treasury, the fertility of the Doab attracted him and, according to Barani, he arbitrarily enhanced the taxes in that region. The taxes were said to be intolerable and they wrought untold miseries on the people. In the words of Barani,

"the enforcement of those schemes was made so rigorous that the feeble and low among the ra'iyat were wiped out, while those who were rich and possessed the means and, wherewithal became rebellious, with the result that the cities and districts were ruined and cultivation was reduced to nothing

On hearing of the ruin and destruction of the ra'iyat in the Doab and fearing lest a similar fate should befall them, the inhabitants of distant provinces also revolted and crept into jungles On account of the diminution of cultivation in the Doab land (*miyan* i Doab), the ruin of the raiyat of the miyan i Doab, and the rare arrival of the caravans and convoys of grain from other parts of Hindustan in Delhi and in the whole of the Doab area, a destructive famine broke out, prices of grains soared high and the rains also stopped, A general famine prevailed, which continued for several years during which period perished millions of human beings, the old established life was disorganised and many people were displaced and uprooted, From that day departed the glory of Sultan Muhammad's empire and his administration declined anti became inffective "

Barani whose native district also suffered from the effects of this enhanced taxation, bitterly criticises the sultan for his cruel treatment of the agriculture the Doab His version of the Doab episode is, however, vague and rather misleading, In the first place, he does not inform, the readers as to the actual rate of the additional assesment imposed by the sultan, his statement like 'the taxes were doubled', or 'increased ten or five times' are meaningless unless we know the existing rates of taxation which were affected by this enhancement, Second, his account of the sufferings of the peasants is, exaggerated, and, in the third place, he confuses principal points in the story by overemphasising the relationship between three distinct issues the Doab episode, the spread of general famine in the country, and the widespread revolts in various parts of his empire, Regarding Muhammad bin Tughluq's taxation in the Doab, a few points are worthy of note While recruiting the Khurasan army

the sultan had made concessions to the peasants and the rajput warrior classes of the Doab, he had remitted even the land tax in certain districts He reintroduced these taxes after the disbandment of the army The people, who had once enjoyed a concession by way of a special privilege, resented even the re-imposition of the normal taxes Nonpayment of taxes had been allowed to them as a privilege but they converted it into their right Moreover, we have reason to believe that the taxes imposed by Muhammad bin Tughluq were not heavy Alauddin Khalji had raised the state demand of land revenues to 50 per cent of the actual produce It was subsequently reduced by Mubarak Shah Khalji and Ghiasuddin Tughluq, the latter attempted to pacify the agriculturists by charging only 10 per cent of the produce as the land revenue Muhammad bin Tughluq probably raised this rate to double the amount In other words, he brought the land revenue to the normal standard, i e , about one-fifth of the actual produce

Of course, in addition to the normal land revenue, Muhammad bin Tughluq levied some abwabs such as house tax and the grazing tax These taxes had been in operation during the reign of Alauddin Khalji and were very unpopular As these had been allowed to fall into disuse under Alauddin's successors, their revival by Muhammad bin Tughluq was resented very much It led to widespread discontent among the people of the Doab The refractory landlords made alliance with the disbanded soldiers of the Khurasan army and created trouble for the government They refused to pay the taxes and made an altogether different use of the arms and the military training that they had acquired a short-while ago at the expense of the state The tax collectors used force for the realisation of state dues As luck would have it, the rains failed and northern

India was caught in the grip of a severe famine about this time, it lasted two or three years The bondage of goodwill and faith between the sultan and his bureaucracy seemed to have broken completely, that is why none among his ministers dared to apprise the sultan of the need to change his taxation policy in time As a result, the revenue officials continued to oppress the starving peasants for the extraction of the state dues Unable to simultaneously bear the government oppression and starvation, the poor cultivators were forced to abandon their lands, most of them flocked to the capital and other provincial towns with their starving families while some resorted to highway robbery The tug-of-war between the unimaginative bureaucracy and peasantry in the Doab is explained by Haji ud Dabir in the following words

"When the tax collectors treated the peasants harshly, the latter killed them On this the emperor sent the *amiran i saddah* against them They killed the peasants Then the peasants seized the opportunity and killed the amiran i saddah As a result, the region (of the Doab) was completely ruined"

As usual, the sultan realised the gravity of the situation too late He adopted liberal relief measures for the populace of Delhi and the other famine-affected areas, Ibn Battuta writes

> "When famine was raging all over Hind and Sind, and prices became exorbitant to such an extent that the price of a maund of wheat rose to six dinars, the sultan ordered six months' provisions at the rate of a daily allowance of one and a half rati of moghrib (equivalent to 750 grams of modern Indian weight) per head to be given to every one great or small, free or slave The jurists and judges set out registering the names of the inhabitants in different streets, sending for the

> people and giving to each victuals amounting to six months' provisions

The collection of land revenue and other taxes was suspended, the peasants were advanced loans for the purchase of bullocks and seeds, and provision was made to dig wells for irrigation Nevertheless, many of the uprooted peasant families could 'not be persuaded to go back to their villages and take up to cultivation once again The Doab episode was silently merged into the countrywide discontent against the misrule of Muhammad bin Tughluq It led to the gradual decline and disintegration of the sultanate of Delhi

Muhammad bin Tughluq had no male issue, on his death, he was succeeded on the throne of Delhi by his cousin Firoze Tughluq, who enjoyed a long reign of thirty-seven years He inherited a truncated empire infested with widespread revolts and disorder The civil services had been crippled and the royal treasury was empty The people in general had been suffering and simmering, with discontent under the oppressive rule of his predecessor, Firoze Tughluq's immediate task was to pacify the subjects and restore law and order He handled the situation very tactfully and initiated a state policy on a conciliatory note It is said that Muhammad bin Tughluq had advanced loans to the peasants to the tune of two crores of rupees For the purpose of restoring the land, villages and quarters which had fallen into ruin during the famine, Firoze Tughluq wrote off all these debts of the agriculturists and others He traced the victims of his predecessor's tyranny and relieved their distress He obtained deeds of satisfaction from them which were buried in the tomb of the deceased sultan, apparently to ensure peace to the departed soul' and help it on the Day of Judgment' This action of Firoze Tughluq, though based on a blind religious faith, proved very helpful to

him in winning the confidence and support of the masses, in a way, the sultan recounted the oppressive deeds of his predecessor and made amends for them

Firoze Tughluq revised the penal code by softening the punishments which were made more humane, brutal punishments based on physical torture and amputation of organs were abolished

The judicial set up was overhauled and evenhanded justice administered to all The sultan increased the salaries of the civil servants and the army

Fiscal Reforms The next problem that confronted Firoze Tughluq was the near economic bankruptcy of the state, he was conscious of the fact that, in order to obtain stability of his rule, general economic health of the state should be improved, royal treasury replenished, and the financial credibility of the government restored He, therefore, took keen interest in the revenue establishment though he was not an expert in financial affairs by any means He thoroughly revised the fiscal policy of his predecessors with the twin objects of ensuring adequate state revenues and reducing the burden on the tax payers He imparted a theocratic tinge to the taxation policy by abolishing as many as twenty-three cesses, including the unpopular grazing and the house taxes According to the sanction of the Islamic law, only four taxes were retained, these were kharaj, zakat, jaziya and khams The rate of kharaj 'the land revenue' was considerably lowered and brought to one tenth of the estimated produce to the great relief of the agriculturists, The earlier sultans of Delhi, particularly Alauddin Khalji, used to acquire from the soldiers four-fifths of the booty, obtained during the war, as khams but Firoze Tughluq, following strictly the

Islamic injunctions, reversed the ratio and wanted his soldiers to pay only one-fifth of such spoils to the state exchequer, the soldiery must have benefited immensely from this measure

On the other hand, in order to show his religious zeal, the sultan extended the scope of the jaziya by levying it on the brahmans also who had previously been exempt from this tax At a later stage, Firoze Tughluq introduced, with the approval of the theologians an irrigation tax at ten per cent of the produce of the lands which were irrigated by the state-constructed canals The sultan deputed Khwaja Hisamuddin Junaid to prepare a rough estimate of he public revenues of the state

He accompanied by a large body of the, staff, travelled through the kingdom for six years and, after examining the revenue records of the various provinces, assessed the revenue expected from the khalsa lands under the direct administrative control of the central at six crore and eighty-five lakh *tankas* Various rough and ready methods, based on local traditions and customs, were adopted for the assessment of land revenue, the scientific principles of the measurement of land and determination of the state demand on the actual produce of the soil, were totally discarded Nevertheless, Firoze Tughluq attempted to prescribe the state demand on a more or less permanent basis It helped him in ensuring a steady flow of revenues into the exchequer and regulating the expenditure of the state in accordance with the income

Firoze Tughluq permitted the collection of jaziya coercive means, otherwise his revenue officials were under strict to make demands ‘in excess of the regular govern instructions not on’, had to ment dues’, and

those found guilty of 'any such exaction make 'full reparation' Firoze Tughluq's motto was

> "Better a people's weal than treasures vast,
> Better an empty chest than hearts downcast"

The interests of the agriculturists were well-protected during the regime of Firoze Tughluq The sultan constructed four or five fine canals which irrigated a large tract of land in the vicinity of Delhi including, Hissar (modern Haryana) New agricultural settlements sprang up along the banks of these canals According to Afif, 150 wells were sunk at state expense to provide drinking water to the travellers and for irrigation Firoze Tughluq is said to have laid out 1200 state-managed fruit gardens in the neighbourhood of the capital Their produce was sold in the open market, it brought substantial income to the exchequer besides providing rich and nutritive food to the royal household and the populace of Delhi Firoze Tughluq also helped in the extension and promotion of the internal trade and commerce by abolishing vexatious taxes and reducing the octroi All these measures benefited the country immensely, agricultural production increased, trade and commerce was revived and the countryside rehabilitated where the '*ra' iyatsg* rew rich and wereatsg rew rich and were satisfied' It warded off famines and ushered in an era of peace and prosperity We have it on the testimony of Afif that

> "abundance of the necessaries of life prevailed in the reign of Firoze Shah not only in the capital but throughout the dominions During the whole forty years of his reign, there was no appearance of scarcity, and the times were so happy that the people of Delhi forgot the reign of Alauddin, although no more prosperous times than this (*sic*) had ever fallen to the lot of any Muhammadan sovereign "

Afif makes an interesting comparison between the 'plenty and cheapness' that prevailed during the reigns of Alauddin Khalji and Firoze Tughluq as follows

> "In the reign of Alauddin the necessaries of life were abundant through excellent management, but through the favour of God, grain continued cheap throughout the reign of Firoze Shah, without any effort on his part Grain was so cheap that, in the city of Delhi, wheat was eight *jitals* a maund, and grain and barley four jitals a maund A campfollower could give his horse a feed often seers of corn (dalida) for one jital Fabrics of all kinds were cheap, and silk goods, both white and coloured, were of moderate price

Firoze Tughluq's agrarian policy was in no way progressive or scientific Instead of streamlining the state machinery in the matters of revenue assessment and collection, the sultan entrusted the work to the bidders, contractors and middlemen The revenue officials were liberally provided but through rent-free land grants Firoze Tughluq revived the jagir system with a vengeance, the whole kingdom was parcelled out into fiefs and the fiefs into districts which were held by the regional and local government officials almost as personal estates In addition to the land grants, the nobility as well as the bureaucracy received fat allowances which enabled them to accumulate large fortunes The nobles enjoyed considerable powers in the internal administrative affairs of their rent-free holdings which cut at the very roots of the uniformity of administration and integrity of the central authority, The system of granting lands or assignments (*itlak*) upon the revenues were extended even to the junior ranks which did an incalculable harm, in the long run, to the army establishment as well as the state The soldiers on active duty were unable to collect the revenues by themselves, and they

sold out their assignment deeds at a discount to the professional revenue collectors of middlemen Afif writes that

> "It was the practice of certain persons in those days to buy up these assignments, which was an accommodation to both parties They used to give one-third of the value for them in, the city and receive assignments carried on a traffic in them, and gaining a good profit, many of them got rich and made their fortunes "

This evil practice robbed the soldiers of their officially declared emoluments, sapped the vitality of the state and ultimately ruined the cultivators as they were fleeced by the contractors and middlemen who grew more influential and powerful with the passage of time In the absence of a strong incentive and support from the centre, the officials could do pretty little against them The agrarian reforms of Firoze Tughluq, therefore, did more harm than good to the peasants as well as the state economy in the long run

Public welfare works Sultan Firoze Tughluq was a great philanthropist, he exerted himself for the well-being of his subjects While referring to his public welfare activities, he spoke in the tone of a religious bigot who apparently intended to do everything for his co-religionists albeit many of his philanthropic deeds benefited all the people-muslims as well as hindus alike He regarded the uplift of the poor and the downtrodden as his religious and moral duty In the Futuhat i Firoze Shahi, which was, in fact, a written sermon, delivered at the Friday mass of the jama masjid of Firozabad, the sultan expressed the desire that

> "to the best of my human power, I should recount and pay my thanks for the many blessings God

> has bestowed upon me so that I may be found among the number of His servants

Firoze Tughluq set up a separate department, called the diwan i khairat, for the help of the poor and the needy (fukra wa maskin) One of its functions was to make arrangements for the marriages of the poor muslim girls at state expense God-fearing and ' extremely humble in his disposition, the sultan paid regard to the holymen, repaired the tombs of the sufi saints, created endowment funds through grant of lands for the maintenance of khanqahs and looked after the comforts of the fakirs and all those devoted to religious pursuits He introduced the practice of granting old age pensions, and opened an employment bureau to find work for the unemployed Of course, a step of misplaced generosity taken by Firoze Tughluq was that he began to offer civil and military services to the persons for life, and some of the higher offices were made almost hereditary He ran charitable kitchens (langars) to provide free food to the poor, constructed serais along tile roads and opened rest houses for the pilgrims 'resorting to the tombs of illustrious kings and celebrated saints' The sultan himself writes that

> "for providing the things necessary in these holy places, I confirmed and gave effect to the grants of villages, lands, and other endowments which had been conferred upon them in olden times In those cases where no endowment, or provision had been settled, I made an endowment, so that these establishments might for ever, be secure of an income, to afford comfort to travellers and wayfarers, to holy men and learned men,"

Firoze Tughluq opened a magnificent charitable hospital (dar ush shifa) in the capital for the benefit of 'all sick persons, residents and travellers, gentle and

simple, bond and free Qualified physicians were appointed to attend to the outdoor as well as indoor patients who were supplied free medicines and food The provincial officers were expected to emulate the example of the sultan in opening such charitable institutions and hospitals within the areas of their jurisdiction

As a benevolent ruler, the sultan constructed canals, repaired the old tanks and dug wells to irrigate the fields and provide water for drinking and washing purposes The grand *Hauz i Ilahi* or tank of Alauddin Khalji in Delhi had been put into disuse and was filled up with earth The people carried on cultivation in it and had dug wells, of which they sold water The sultan cleaned it out so that this great tank might again be filled from year to year Similarly, the *Hauz i Shamsi* or tank of Altumish had been 'deprived of water by some graceless men who stopped up the channels of supply' Firoze Tughluq punished those 'incorrigible men severely and opened again the closed up channels' for the public benefit

Firoze Tughluq took keen interest in the promotion of education and learning He was a great patron of scholars and writers, the maulvis and ulama received liberal subsistence allowances from the state He opened many schools (maktabs) and colleges (madrasas) in important towns, these and the numerous elementary schools attached to the mosques throughout the sultanate were liberally provided by the state Firoze Tughluq was a builder par excellence He founded new cities, added new townships to tile existing urban habitats, built forts, palaces, mosques, tombs, water reservoirs, caravan serais, bridges, canals, public baths, hospitals and charity houses He founded the cities of Fatehabad, Hissar Firoza (modern Hissar), Jaunpur and Firozabad, now known as Kotla

Firoze Shall, a part of the metropolis The sultan showed keen interest in the preservation of old monuments and carried out extensive repairs to most of the tombs and public buildings of his predecessors Though ignorant of the real significance of the Ashokan pillars, Firoze Tughluq got two of them brought to Delhi—one from Topra (district Ambala) and the other from Meerut, and transplanted them at the new township of Firozabad

Firoze Tughluq is said to have established 36 state-owned factories for the manufacture of various accessories of life and luxurious goods for use by the royalty and the public, These were managed by a special branch of *diwan i wizarat*, called the diwan an khana The labour force was provided by the slaves who were imparted technical training so that they might become useful members of the society Consciously or unconsciously, Firoze Tughluq gave an inducement to the expansion of the system of slavery or bonded labour, He is said to have 1,80,000 slaves who were attached to the royal establishment alone,' 40,000 of them mounted guard at the royal palace for tile defence of the royal family The sultan encouraged the practice of enslaving the prisoners of war and sometimes organised raids into the territories of the 'infidel' principalities simply with the object of securing slaves who were forcibly converted to islam The provincial governors and nobility were under instructions to supply more and more of the slaves as a part of their royal liabilities or annual tribute The sultan demanded unqualified loyalty and service from the slaves Though paid liberally by the sultan, most of them did not reconcile themselves to the loss of personal liberties nor did they develop the feeling of loyalty to the ruling family or the state They served the sultan during his lifetime but wreaked their

vengeance upon the members of the royal family after his death They unhesitatingly chopped off the heads of the princes and hung them at the gates of the royal court

Firoze Tughluq was an orthodox sunni mussalman, he resorted to religious bigotry as a matter of state policy, albeit by virtue of his gentle and humane nature, he could not afford to be cruel and inhuman towards the non-muslims in actual practice He suffered from an inferiority complex that he had been born of a hindu mother, therefore, in order to establish his credibility as tile sovereign of 'an Islamic state' and leader of 'the faithful', he publicly demonstrated contempt for hinduism and displayed extraordinary zeal for Islam He was equally intolerant of the shias and other muslim dissenters He always attempted to will the goodwill and support of the ulama and extended the influence of tile' theologians in the state affairs He was the last great sultan of Delhi, with his death in 1388 departed the glory of tile sultanate It rapidly disintegrated under his weak and incompetent successors

Invasion of Amir Timur (1398-99). its baneful Effects on the Life and Condition of the People

Northern India fell a victim 'to the fury of Amir Timur and his marauding hordes in 139899 Nicknamed *Timur i Lang—'Timur the Lame'*, he was one of the greatest monarchs of central Asia, the second most barbaric, bloodthirsty and awe-inspiring warrior after Chengez Khan, who set on the throne of Samarqand He waged ruthless wars against the adjoining countries and established his sway over the whole of central Asia, including Persia and Afghanistan It is said that during the ceaseless warfare carried on by him for over thirty-five years of (1370-1405) he never

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during their conflict with the army of Delhi Sultan Mahmud Tughluq, a weak successor of Firoze Tughluq's ruling house and his minister Mallu Iqbal fought an action with the invaders on December 17, 1398 but suffered defeat and fled, Mallu retreated to Bulandshahr while Mahmud Tughluq escaped to Gujarat Timur made a triumphant entry into Delhi the next day, the leading citizens and ulama of the capital waited upon the victor and sought mercy for the inhabitants Amir Timur agreed to spare their lives and was accorded royal reception by the populace of Delhi He stayed in the capital for fifteen days only The fabulous wealth of the ex-rulers of Delhi and the nobility, including invaluable treasures, horses and elephants fell into his hands, besides he received immense wealth and supplies from the citizens as 'the contributions laid upon the city', albeit his turbulent soldiers were bent upon loot and plunder One day 'a party of fierce turk soldiers laid violent hands upon the goods of the inhabitants', the latter resisted and in the scuffle that followed, some soldiers of Timur were killed In a fit of rage, Timur ordered a general massacre of the populace of Delhi The bloody carnage continued for five days Amir Timur himself describes the sack of Delhi in the following words

> "The flames of strife were thus lighted and spread through the whole city from Jahanpanah and Siri to old Delhi The savage turks fell to killing and plundering The hindus set fire to their houses with their own hands, burned their wives and children in them, and rushed into the fight and were killed The hindus and gabres of the city showed much alacrity and boldness in fighting On that day, Thursday, and all the night of Friday, nearly 15,000 turks were engaged in slaying, plundering and destroying When morning broke out on Friday, all my army, no longer under

> control, went off to the city and thought of nothing but killing, plundering and making prisoners the spoil was so great that each man secured from fifty to a hundred prisoners, men, women and children There was no man who took less than twenty The other booty was immense in rubies, diamonds garnets, pearls and other gems, jewels of gold and silver, ashrafies, tankas of gold and sliver, and brocades and silks of great value Gold and silver ornaments of the hindu women were obtained in such quantities as to exceed all account,

"Excepting the quarter of the sayyads, the ulama and the other mussalmans, the whole city was sacked The pen of fate had written down this destiny for the people of this city Although I was desirous of sparing them, I could not succeed, for it was the will of God that this calamity should fall upon the city"

When a lakh of the hungry wolves (gurgans) were let loose upon the defenceless citizens of the metropolis, it is difficult to perceive how they could discriminate between hindus and muslims among the commonfolk, may be some sayyads and maulvis, because of their distinct physical make-up and garments, were spared their lives Of course, the prisoners included a large number of the masons and craftsmen, both hindus and muslims Who were taken to central Asia to slave for the victors

On his return march, Timur sacked the towns of Meerut and Hardwar, and then followed a more northerly route along the foothills Kangra and Jammu were ravaged en route to Lahore where he stayed for a while and made arrangements for the despatch of his troops in a systematic order Heavily laden with booty, the victorious army of Timur crossed back the Indus in March 1399 en route to Samarqand His invasion had

disastrous effects on the socio-cultural and economic condition of northern India

The entire administrative set up of northern India was thrown out of gear by Timur's onslaught The people who escaped death or enslavement at the hands of his soldiers were left without adequate protection under the defunct governmental authority of the land Political anarchy encouraged the thieves, highwaymen and other antisocial elements to create havoc among the helpless people The socioeconomic life of the countryside having been dislocated, the agricultural production stopped resulting in the scarcity of foodstuffs and the rise of prices Timur left behind famine, disease and misery for the inhabitants of northwestern India Never before had so much harm been done by any invader to India in a single onslaught, the vandalism displayed by-Mahmud of Ghazni during his Indian campaigns pales into insignificance before the atrocities committed by the marauders of Amir Timur on the unarmed and defenceless citizens

Amir Timur gave a fatal blow to the Tughluq dynasty and the sultanate of Delhi It was an irony of fate that the grand edifice of the sultanate which had been raised by the strenuous efforts of the turkish leader Muhammad Ghori and his brilliant turkish slave generals should be razed to the ground mercilessly, two centuries later, by Amir Timur, the greatest turkish warrior of the day Delhi, once the metropolis of an extensive Islamic empire on the subcontinent, and the hub of Islamic culture and civilisation to the cast of Baghdad, lay in ruins, with its debris soaked in the blood of its unfortunate citizens It was not a mere sack of the city by Timur, he insulted, humiliated and disgraced a magnificent creation of the civilised world, in a most barbaric and

inhuman manner He robbed the city not only of its wealth but also honour, dignity and self-respect Delhi stood downgraded in the estimation of the people and lost its glory and prestige as the imperial capital of India for a long time to come Anarchy prevailed everywhere in northern India The fear of any central authority taking its roots in Delhi in the near future having disappeared, the warlords of average capabilities and narrow regional outlooks, raised their heads and started a scramble for territorial possessions, thus making the confusion worse confounded

The invasion of Amir Timur guaranteed the consolidation and prosperity of the two strong kingdoms—Bahmani and Vijayanagar in the south which had come into existence in the days of Muhammad bin Tughluq, albeit no such political power emerged in northern and central India which could fill up the vacuum, caused by the decline of the sultanate, on an extensive scale The process of disintegration of the sultanate into regional states and petty principalities, which had begun long before, received a fillip by the invasion of Amir Timur

One of the declared objectives of Amir Timur had been to destroy 'the infidels' of India albeit his army, like a steamroller, knocked down all the Indians alike, whether hindus or muslims As a matter of fact, Amir Timur insulted India and its people as a whole, and, like Mahmud of Ghazni, did more harm to the cause of Islam than to 'the infidels' in the subcontinent, it was the turkish sultanate of Delhi which was left prostrate and bleeding, beyond all hopes of recovery The role of the sultans of Delhi in the socioeconomic or cultural development of their subjects comes to an end with the invasion of Amir Timur

37

Educational Development

The turko-afghan conquerors of northern India brought with them not only a new religion but also their own system of education to regulate the intellectual and cultural life of the people, and they enforced it on their subjects. The hindus had a mature and highly advanced system of education which constituted the backbone of the ancient Indian culture and civilisation albeit the foreign victors had least regard for it. Rather, they considered it to be an instrument for the perpetuation of 'infidelity' and 'idolatory' in the land, and looked at it with contemptuous indifference if not, active hostility. During the army operations, the aggressors struck at the indigenous educational institutions and attempted to wipe them out of existence as far as possible. The brahmanic and jain temples, tirthas—'the places or pilgrimage', and the buddhist monasteries, which were the primary centres of ancient Indian education, were desecrated, and *masjids* erected on their ruins to proclaim the victory of Islam. The higher seats of indigenous learning at Thatta, Multan, Mathura, Varanasi, Nalanda and Vikramasila fell victims to the armies of aggression, at many places, the buildings of the educational institutions were razed to the ground and libraries set on fire. Loss of national independence by their patrons and transplantation of an entirely new system of education based on the study of Persian and Arabic

languages and Islamic theology led to the extinction of the hindu seats of higher learning within the boundaries of the sultanate in the thirteenth century

Two parallel systems of education

There are reasons to believe that many of the distinguished teachers, writers and scholars of the war-affected areas fled to the neighbouring hindu states, particularly towards the south, as refugees, and were accorded protection by their local rulers As a major part of the country remained free from the turkish domination in the thirteenth century, the ancient or the hindu system of education remained intact beyond the boundaries of the sultanate and continued to flourish as ever before By the time Islam penetrated into the south as a political force under the khaljis, much of the fury of the muslim conquerors against the hindu institutions of learning was over, and the two systems of education, one indigenous and the other foreign in contents as well as objectives, became operative side by side though they were quite exclusive of each other There seems to have been very little meeting ground between the two until the rise of Akbar to power by the middle of the sixteenth century The two apparently rival systems of education bore strong affinity with each other, however. Both of them were firmly rooted in theology and were managed by their respective priestly classes who acted as the religious and spiritual guardians as well as the intellectual leaders of their communities They thus played the roles of teachers and preachers simultaneously They wielded great influence in their respective state policies, whether at the court of the sultans or in those of the hindu rulers, and were usually held in high esteem by the people at large Like hindus, the muslims also attached great importance to education as a vehicle of change and

progress, they revered their learned men and regarded it as their religious duty to provide for their maintenance

Hindu system of education

The traditional hindu system of India remained in vogue during the medieval period without much change Education was not regarded as a state responsibility in ancient times albeit it was nourished and most jealously maintained by the hindu society through its own resources As a matter of fact, the hindu rulers, whether of the ancient period or those of the medieval age, 'had nothing directly to do with education' It was a private affair of the people, managed entirely by the brahman, buddhist and jain priests The rulers might 'subsidise it, if they thought it fit to do so, with grants of land or money, but could impose no conditions or control on teachers, affecting freedom of work' The primary schools, called pathshalas, were usually attached to or housed in the premises of the brahmanic or jain temples Either the priests themselves acted as teachers or appointed pandits or jain scholars to impart education to the minor children of the locality free of charge These institutions received state grants or were maintained entirely by the public endowments and charity So also was the case with the buddhist monasteries where the monks imparted education in the three Rs —viz, reading, writing and arithmetic, besides the knowledge of holy scriptures to their young wards Apart from the temples and shrines, big villages and towns, which contained a substantial population of the caste hindus, maintained their own pathshalas These were set up by the local inhabitants through corporate activity and ran on public charity In spite of their defeat and discomfiture on the military and political fronts, the hindu populace of the sultanate did not allow their

institutions of elementary education or primary schools to die out of existence Though deprived of the state patronage, the pathshalas were stubbornly maintained by the brahman scholars and priests with whatever meagre resources at their command Sometimes a teacher would conduct his classes within his not so spacious family quarters, and 'the home of the teacher functioned as the school in those days' Education in the brahmanic pathshalas was free and accessible to all except to sudras while the buddhists 'who had no castes, imparted education to all without any restriction or discrimination' As the education was primarily religious in nature and content, the teachers committed their holy scriptures and even the secular literature of the past to rote memory They thus preserved the knowledge and wisdom of bygone days and took it as their religious and moral duty to pass on this knowledge to the younger generations without any personal obligations

The ancient institutes of higher learning were known by different names in various parts of the country such as *gurukulas, gurugrahas, maths, tols, sangam, chatuspathis or chaupasis* They maintained high standards of academic studies and spiritual or philosophical attainments, and could be compared to modern colleges and residential universities albeit they did not owe their birth to the statutes of any government nor depended, upon the financial aid from official quarters for their survival, Instead, they came into being through a process of evolution or natural growth of education and learning by the society and were deeply rooted in the religious thoughts and beliefs of the people They were run by the teachers themselves without intervention of the state bureaucracy and maintained by the public as their social, religious and cultural obligations to the

progeny These institutions were 'like the studia generalia of medieval Europe'—the settlements of the teachers and the taught

The ancient Indian system of education, though based on religion was secular in character' Broadly speaking, the 'preservation of ancient heritage and culture' and its 'enrichment' was the primary aim of education With the establishment of the muslim rule in India, the progress of hindu education came to a standstill but the problem of safeguarding 'the heritage of the past became so great that all the ability of scholars was engrossed in preserving it' The specified objectives of ancient Indian education included among others the formation of character, building up of all-round personality, and the training of rising generation in the performance of social and religious duties' According to a European scholar, the hindu system of education stood for moral and spiritual progress of which 'purity in thought and life formed 'the keystone' Whelped the development of personality by cultivating self-respect, self-reliance and self-restraint The educational system laid particular stress upon civic and social duties and responsibilities'

A child was usually sent to the pathshala at the age of five when a formal initiation ceremony upanayana' was performed at an auspicious time, determined in consultation with an astrologer, at the occasion, the parents gave gifts to the brahmans and distributed alms among the poor As all the centres of higher learning were residential institutions, the students sought admission there and resided with the families of their teachers throughout the period of their education and training The period of study and the duration of courses were not fixed albeit the student-life normally lasted till an individual attained the age of twenty-five according to the Manusmriti

The students observed brahmacharya and led a life of rigorous discipline and simplicity The teachers treated the students like their own sons while the latter performed all sorts of domestic services for them, including scavenging, washing of clothes, and looking after their cattle A student was always at the beck and call of his teacher and very often had to go to the adjoining villages for the collection of alms for himself and his teacher', family The teacher also fulfilled his obligations towards his pupils as their spiritual father, he provided food and clothing for them out of the provisions received at the institute through public charity or collective efforts of the pupils themselves, and looked after their physical and moral health If a student fell ill 'the teacher would nurse and serve him as a father would do for his Son' The hindu system of education exalted 'the teacher to such a position of reverence that he was worshipped by his pupils'

Sanskrit was the medium of instruction from the elementary school level The method of teaching was oral because of the fact that printing was unknown in those days and the handwritten manuscripts were rare The knowledge of the three Rs was quickly supplemented by the introduction of some religious texts, including the simplified versions of the Puranas, the stories of Ramayana and Mahabharata, and elementary lessons in dharamasastras The curriculum of the institutions of higher education was fairly extensive and diversified Besides the specialised study of Sanskrit language and literature, and the religious scriptures of the brahmanic, buddhist and jain cults, it comprised a large number of secular subjects such as mathematics, astronomy, astrology, yoga, topic, philosophy, biology, geography, medicine and military science Caste and professional requirements were taken into consideration in granting admission to the

students for various courses of study Usually a period of ten to twelve years was needed for graduation in a subject The system of holding classwise annual examinations was not in vogue albeit each student was put to various types of tests by the teacher from time to time and promoted to the next higher standard, the teacher himself was, of course, the sole judge of his pupil's standard of Attainment at a given stage

The completion of studies and termination of the period of brahmacharya was marked by a formal ceremony called samvartana which 'included a number of acts signifying the end of the austerities imposed upon the condition of studentship It is said that on that auspicious day, the brahmachari was confined in a room in the morning lest his superior lustre puts to shame the sun which shines in the lustre borrowed of him' He came out of the room at midday, 'shaved his head and cut off all marks of his studentship Then followed the bath accompanied by the use of powder, perfumes, ground sandalwood and the like to be presented by the friends and relations of the student', Thereupon he became a snataka and offered gurudakshina to his teacher and sought his permission to enter grihasth-ashram or householder's life after marriage The gurudakshina might comprise anything of whatever value such as a cow, a horse, garments, grain, or even P handful of fruits and flowers which the student could conveniently 'procure' from his friends and relations or collect as gifts for his teacher by begging, In the opinion of R K Mookerji, the payment of gurudakshina was 'enjoined more as a religious act formally bringing to a close the period of studentship and marking the fulfilment of a sacred vow than as any kind of material remuneration' for the education imparted to him by the teacher No formal degrees or diplomas were awarded albeit some of the

outstanding students did receive the honorific titles of sarvabhauma, upadhyaya, mahaupadhyaya, vedi, dwivedi, trivedi, chaturvedi, etc , either from their teacher or the congregation of scholars on the basis of their academic merit

As mentioned earlier, a number of hindu institutions of higher education and learning were overrun by the arab and turko-afghan invaders in the wake of the conquest of northern India, the institutions thus destroyed and put out of action included those situated at Debal, Thatta, Multan, Vaihand, Lahore, Kurukshetra, Mathura, Vrindavan, Ajmer, Prayag, Varanasi, Kanauj, Ayodhya, Nalanda, and Vikramasila, Most of their scholars migrated to other parts of the country Some of these educational institutions were revived by the brahman and buddhist scholars after the establishment of the sultanate and restoration of law and order in the Indo-Gangetic valley albeit, having been deprived of the state patronage, social status and religious freedom, the hindu system of higher education did not attract many students or teachers At places like Thatta, Multan, Sirhind, Mathura, Vrindavan, Prayag, Ayodhya and Varanasi, hindu institutes of higher learning were re-established by some individuals but none of them could regain the past glory and prestige of the pre-muslim days On the other hand, those parts of the country which remained beyond the pale of the muslim rule were studded with numerous institutions of higher learning of national and international fame as ever before Some of those shot into prominence because of the influx of scholars from the muslim occupied areas and the liberal patronage extended to them by the rajput chieftains Quite a few of the hindu rulers of the early medieval period were themselves distinguished scholars and writers who made substantial

contributions towards the advancement of education and learning

University of Mithila Mithila occupied a premier position among the hindu universities of northern India in the medieval period Situated in north Bihar, it had been a famous centre of brahmanic learning in the east ever since the Later Vedic Age In the remote past, the country round about Mithila was known as Videha, It continued to enjoy protection under its indigenous hindu chieftains who retained their hold over the region as the feudatories of the muslim rulers Mithila was ruled over by the Karnata dvynasty from c 1150 to 1395, followed by the Kameshwara dynasty whose rule lasted upto 1515 A D It was followed by yet another ruling house, founded by Mahesh Thakur, in the time of Akbar they were feudatories of the Mughal empire, Mithila, had thus a very long tradition of ancient Indian scholarship and learning and it continued to flourish during the medieval period Under the Kameshwara dynasty, one of Mithila's, scholars, Jagaddhara wrote commentaries on a variety of tests including Bhagwad Gita, Meghaduta and Malati-Madhava One of its Poets Vidyapati, the author of maithili songs, inspired writers of Bihar and Bengal for a long time Ganesa Upadhyaya (c 1093-1150 A D) founded the school of navya nyaya—'new logic' at Mithila and wrote his 'epoch-making work', entitled Tattva Chintamani which comprised about 300 pages but whose 'commentaries make up over 1,000,000 pages in three centuries of its study' One of the great masters of Mithila was Mahesh Thakur who flourished during the reign of Akbar It is said that one of his pupils, Raghunandan Das Rai, 'an accomplished logician, went out on an intellectual dig-vijaya at the instance of emperor Akbar who, pleased with his performance, made a gift to him of the whole

tract of Mithila which, in turn, the loyal pupil transferred to his guru as his fee for teaching him (gurudakshina) Mahesh Thakur thus became the founder of the Darbhanga Rai family' The University of Mithila had adopted a very peculiar system of examination to assess the students' performance for graduation or completion of study, it was called salaka-pariksha by which a candidate for graduation had to explain that page of a manuscript which was pierced last by a needle run through it It was 'a test of the capacity of the candidate to explain unprepared any part of the texts he had studied so as to demonstrate his mastery of the subject in all its parts'

University of Nadia A small islet called navadvipa or Nadia, situated on the Bhagirathi at its confluence with Jalangi in Bengal, developed as an important seat of hindu learning after the destruciton of the buddhist universities of Nalandaand Vikramasila by the muslim armies of invasion The town of Nadia seems to have been by the Pala kings of Bengal although it roe into prominence when king Lakshmansena (1178-1205) of Gauda made it his seat of governance Lakshmansena was a great patron of art and learning, his court was adorned by a galaxy of distinguished scholars and writers who built up the reputation of Nadia as a seat of ancient Indian knowledge and wisdom Halayudha, the prime minister of Lakshmansena, was a renowned scholar who wrote a number of books, including Smriti Sarvasva and Nyaya Sarvasva, while his court-poet Jayadeva composed the immortal Gita-Govinda' a masterpiece of literature of any age or clime' Nadia fell into the hands of muslim armies led by Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khalji in 1197 when its Sena ruler retreated to the eastern Bengal and set up his headquarters at Vikrampura Nevertheless, the

muslim conquerors of Bengal who did not interfere with the religion and culture of the people and the indigenous social institutions, accorded protection to the magnificent educational buildings and libraries of Nadia Accordingly, Nadia continued to flourish as a famous hindu seat of learning throughout the medieval period

Early medieval Bengal is known for yet another hindu seal, of higher education which was set up by king Rama Pala (1084-1130), at Ramavati on the banks of the Ganges and its tributary Karatoya in Varendra region The university lasted about a century until it was destroyed by the muslim invaders in 1203 A D, but, in spite of its relatively short span of life, it made substantial contributions towards the advancement of ancient education and literature through its scholars such as Vibhutichandra, Danasila, Mokshakar Gupta '

The valley of Kashmir with its headquarters at Srinagar deserves special mention as the repository of ancient brahmanic as well as buddhistic literary traditions, it remained an important centre of higher education and learning throughout the early medieval period Being surrounded by lofty mountains and isolated from the plains, it remained outside the sphere of influence of the sultanate of Delhi, its indigenous hindu rulers foiled all attempts of the muslim invaders to establish their foothold there till the second quarter of the fourteenth century The credit for the establishment of muslim rule there goes to Shah Mirza, an inhabitant of Swat, who overthrew the ruling family of his hindu patron in 1339 and ascended the throne with the title of Shamsuddin Shah One of his descendants, styled Zainul Abidin (1420-70), is famous in the history of Kashmir for his policy of religious toleration and public welfare

activities, he has been called the 'Akbar of Kashmir' In order to respect the religious sentiments of hindus, who constituted the majority of his subjects, he abolished jaziya, banned the slaughter of cows and extended liberal patronage to Sanskrit language and literature

Akbar the Great conquered Kashmir and made it part and parcel of the Mughal empire in 1555 A D, by that time ancient hindu system of higher education had been revived throughout the length and breadth of the country, therefore, Srinagar continued to flourish as an important centre of Sanskrit studies throughout the medieval period Students from all parts of the country flocked to the ashramas of brahman scholars and sages of Kashmir to receive instructions in religious and secular subjects Apart from Nalanda and Vikramasila, Kashmir supplied the maximum number of brahman and buddhist scholars and missionaries for the spread of Indian religion and culture in Tibet and China, it continued to do so in the medieval age too when the names of Nalanda and Vikramasila had become a thing of the past Of course Dipankara Sri Jnana, popularly known as Acharya Atisa, who worked as missionary in Tibet from 1040 to 1053 A D , hailed from Gauda (Bengal), he was vice chancellor of the Vikramasila university when he accepted an invitation from the Tibetan ruler Chan Chub to visit Lhasa He received a rousing reception at Lhasa amidst 'songs of welcome sun by all the people' and was 'conducted to the king by an escort of 300 horsemen It was he who purged Tibetan buddhism of its many and gross corruptions which had crept into it in time and founded the new religion of Lamaism' He died at Nethan near Lhasa at the age of 73 and left an indelible influence in Tibet mainly through his works showing him as the greatest writer on Tibetan

buddhism on which about 200 works are ascribed to him, mostly on vajrayana Acharya Atisa was also a great scholar in Tibetan language into which he translated twenty-two Sanskrit works from India Ratnavajra, a Kashmiri brahman in Tibet, translated fourteen Sanskrit works into Tibetan while Maitreya Bhadra, a scholar of Sanskrit from Aryavarta, acted as the rajguru of the Chinese emperor as late as 1110 A D , Srinagar has given us the only standard work on indigenous historical literature in three volumes, bearing the common title Rajatarangini, prepared by Kalhana Pandit and others

The rajput rulers of early medieval India were not only patrons of learning and literature but quite a few of them were themselves scholars of repute Their courts adorned numerous Sanskrit scholars poets and writers of national fame who kept the torch of ancient Indian literary tradition burning Dhar and Ujjain were the famous centres of learning in the Malwa The Parmar Raja Bhoja of Dhar (1000-55), popularly known as Bhojadeva or Dharesvara, was a prolific author who wrote on a variety of subjects including Sanskrit grammar, poetics, astrology, yoga and medicine, Srichandra wrote commentaries on Mahapurana of Pushpadanta, Asadhara composed more twenty of which Sagar Dharamamrita and Anagara Dharamamrita were very popular, it is said that Asadhara wandered from place to place 'due to fear of harassment by the muslim raiders' and stayed in the courts of five different rajput chieftains during the course of his wanderings Amitagati, a jain scholar, received honours from the hands of three parmar rulers, Munja,

Bhoja and Sindhula of Malwa Hemachandra Suri (1088-1172), a versatile genius of Gujarat, was a born poet and scholar of Sanskrit and Prakrit, he converted

king Kumarpala to jainism and wrote numerous books, poetic compositions and religious treatises One of his works entitled Trishashti Salakapurusha Charita describes in ten cantos the lives of 63 best persons according to the jain traditions Hemachandra narrates the life-history and achievements of his royal disciple in a unique Sanskrit-cum-Prakrit epic entitled Kumarapala Charita His book Kavyanusasan, written in the form of sutra and vriti, along with its commentary, called the Viveka, constitutes a complete manual of poetics in eight chapters Vadiraja, a great logician and poet of Gujarat, flourished at the court of Jaisimha Siddhraja, the Chalukya ruler of Vatapi (110243) Ramchandra (1110-73) a pupil of Hemachandra, has to his credit eleven plays, including Yadu Vilasa, Salya Harishchandra Rohini-Mriganka, etc Hastivarman was another genius of the age as a dramatist who produced Vikranta Kaurava, Maithili Kalyana, Anjana Prananjaya, and Subhadra

South India, beyond the Vindhyas, had a glorious record of its own literary achievements before the establishment of muslim rule and the rise of Bahmani and Vijayanagar kingdoms there As we are all aware, the foundations of ancient Indian culture were laid 'by the fusion of Indo-Aryan and pre-Aryan elements in varying conditions and proportions' The South came under the fold of Aryan culture at a comparatively later date, accordingly, the Indian languages, literature and institution, in the south, faithfully preserved 'much more of pre-Aryan India than anywhere else' With the exception of the marathas, who constituted 'the southernmost of Indo-Aryan speaking peoples of India' the rest of the southern peninsula, beyond the Vindhyas, spoke the Dravidian languages, including Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada With the gradual aryanisation of the south,

Sanskrit, with its rich religious and sociocultural heritage, came to occupy a position of respect and dignity with the ruling elite and the priestly class, nevertheless, the literary development of the south was marked by the simultaneous growth of Dravidian languages, almost hand in glove with Sanskrit and its Prakrit variations

The process of aryanisation of the south had started in the first millennium B C , it received impetus with the rise of buddhist and Jain movements in the sixth century B C Major part of south India was incorporated in the Mauryan empire (322-185 B C) which welded the inhabitants of the Indian subcontinent into a great nation and played a significant role in bringing about sociocultural synthesis between the north and the south The Pandyas, the Cholas and the Cheras of the extreme south retained their separate political entities albeit they also felt the deep impact of the country-wide cultural forces and merged their identity with the Indian nationhood by the beginning of the Christian era Political vacuum created by the decline of the Mauryan empire was filled in by the rise of the Sungas (185-73 B C) and Kanvas (73-28 B C) in the north and the Andhra-Satavahanas (230 B C 225 A D) in the south The latter gradually overran the whole of the Deccan, western and central India and a part of the Indo-Gangetic valley, including Magadha, and emerged as an all India power The various Puranic texts show wide differences in their statements regarding the number of the Satavahana kings and the period of their rule, we have reason to believe that this dynasty produced about two dozens of the monarchs who ruled for more than four hundred years The interesting controversy regarding the race and origin of the Andhra-Satavahanas itself reveals their true

nationalistic character, 'the lords of the three oceans' carried in their veins a mixture of aryan and dravidian blood and represented the composite Indian culture, formed by the synthesis of aryan and dravidian elements almost in equal proportions Accordingly, the educational system and literature of south India also showed two streams of aryan and dravidian elements respectively, running parallel to and yet intermingling freely with each other As a matter of fact, it was the introduction of Sanskrit as a vehicle of religion and culture which provided 'the first important medium of expression to the men of education and learning in the south, it has rightly been asserted that Sanskrit played the role of a "magic wand whose touch alone raised each of the dravidian languages from the level of a patois to that of a literary idiom' although 'the influence they exercised on one another was also not inconsiderable'

Apastamba, a scholar of Sanskrit, who prepared south Indian versions of quite a few vedic texts, flourished in the Godavari valley sometime in the third century B C , the Sanskrit language used by him 'seems to be of an age preceding that of Panini, and the followers of his school abound in the land south of the Narbada' The Sanskrit school of Satyashadha Hiranyakesins, whose dharamasutra shows 'clear traces of Apastamba's influence' acquired prominence in the Malabar and south Kanara region between the first century B C and the first century A D The Sanskrit compositions of these scholars bear 'influences of the idiom of the dravidian languages' During the Vakataka-Gupta age (320-550 A D), South India became a repository of Indian art and learning while the south Indian scholars assumed the role as the custodians of hindu cultural heritage, including education and learning in Sanskrit and the dravidian

languages when the north fell a victim to the invasions of the Hunas During the early medieval period, therefore, it was the south which faithfully preserved and jealously safeguarded the ancient Indian cultural heritage to the best of its capacity until the muslim arms struck a serious blow to it under the command of Alauddin Khalji and his military generals

The earliest collection of Tamil literature now available, called the Sangam literature', belongs to the first three or four centuries of Christian era, the word 'sangam' in Tamil means a college or an institution of higher learning comprising the corporate activity of a number of scholars The collection includes 2,279 poems by 473 poets, including some women, and the whole literature is grouped in eight anthologies, six of which are prefaced, in the form of invocations, by the poems composed by Perundevanar of Madura who popularised the concept of Bharatam It shows that a national college (sangam) of Tamil poets flourished in Madura obviously under the royal patronage of the Pandya rulers in the extreme southern tip of the peninsula Almost all the indigenous ruling dynasties, big or small, of the south, including the Pandyas, the Cheras, the Cholas, the western Chalukyas of Vatapi or Badami (547-753 A D), the Pallavas (575-895), the Rashtrakutas (753-973), Later or Eastern Chalukyas of Kalyani (973-1190) the Hoysalas of Dwarsamudra, the Kakatiyas of Warrangal, and the Yadavas of Deogiri, were patrons of education and learning in Sanskrit and dravidian languages Tamil language and literature developed side by side with Sanskrit whereas the origin of Kannada, Telugu and Malayalam as distinct languages can be traced back to the sixth and seventh centuries of the Christian era, Before the penetration of the khalji arms, the whole of south India was studded with institutions of higher learning

in Sanskrit and dravidian languages For instance, during the reign of the Pallava monarch Vijayanripatunga Varman, three villages were gifted by the state to support a college which offered specialised study in four Vedas, six Vedangas, a mimansa, nyaya, puranas and dharamsastras, like the Ganga, supported by Siva on his matted locks' A village created an endowment fund in 1023 A D , during the rule of Rajendra Chola I for the establishment of a Vedic college at Ennayiram (south Arcot district) providing for free board and tuition of 340 students and ten teachers Similarly, a Sanskrit college, attached to the Trayi-Purusha temple at Salotgi (modern Bijapur district) had twenty-seven hostels for the residence of its students and teachers who hailed from all over India, it was run by the state patronage and public charities

The muslim system of education, like its hindu counterpart, was religious in nature, its primary object was to propagate Islam and spread the light of learning among the faithful' Its analogy with the latter ends at this very stage, however In Islam, the state itself was treated as subservient to religion, it was defined as 'an instrument to serve the creed in the attainment of its objectives or fulfilment of ideals of the Muslim brotherhood', therefore, the state patronage to and control over the Muslim system of education were the logical outcome of this theocratic concept Hence it was that the muslim system of education in India was planted and patronised by the sultans of Delhi and other Muslim rulers of early medieval India The *sadr* or the minister in charge of the ecclesiastical department and religious endowments' was ipso facto the head of the education department as well He was the Chief representative or spokesman of the ulama who shared power of the

state in association with the umara or the ahl e saif It has been explained earlier how the ulama or the ahl e qalam viz, the muslim theologians, scholars, and civil and judicial administrators, constituted the brain of the turkish rule in India, of which umara or the ahl e saif formed the sword-arm The state lubricated the financial wheels of education, and exercised general supervision and control over it whereas the ulama determined the educational policy and managed the educational institutions The centres of higher learning, called the madrasas, were almost exclusively financed by the state while the primary schools, called maktabs, formed a part of or were associated with the masjids, khanqahs darghahs, and other holy shrines or places of worship These were run by liberal financial aid from the state and its officials as well as public charities The state which stood for the propagation and glory of Islam wanted 'a certain type of men' and the ulama who 'were the educators from top to bottom, were interested in the creation of orthodox muslims capable of maintaining the supremacy of Islam and of preserving the separate identity of the Muslim community', thus 'the aims and objects of the two' being identical', they cooperated with each other in the perpetuation of a theocratic system of education There being perfect harmony between the objectives of the state and the ulama, the state patronage for education was great but education was not dictated The teachers were free to form their syllabus and teach the subjects they liked, religion being always an inseparable part of it'

The maktabs, like the pathshalas of the hindus, were usually attached to masjids and shrines A mulla or maulvi, in charge of a masjid, however small, in each Muslim locality or mohalla, would run a single-teacher maktab within the premises of the masjid

itself, sometimes he might, like a brahman teacher, hold the classes in his own house According to an Islamic tradition, a child should be sent to the school when he was four years, four months and four days old'

A bismillah ceremony, similar to the upanayana of the hindus, was performed at an appropriate time, fixed in consultation with an astrologer A wealthy child might receive elementary lessons in education from a tutor at his parental house, the practice of appointing ataliqs or tutors for imparting education to the children of nobility and the princes was common, these tutors were paid handsomely by their patrons Otherwise, education was free and open to all without discrimination, albeit having been based essentially on the study of the Islamic scriptures, it automatically deprived the hindu children from benefiting from it The first lesson started with the recitation of the opening sentence of the qalima by the maulvi which the pupil was asked to repeat The teacher then wrote a few letters of the alphabet on the takhti—the wooden Writing board' with black ink and pen of reed, and the pupil was instructed to handle the pen properly and move it over the written letters or in imitation thereof so as to make him familiar with the word-forms The initial education consisted in memorising certain parts of the Quran which were deemed essential for every Muslim to remember for the purpose of his daily prayers The elementary knowledge in the three Rs was imparted through the Persian language while oral instruction, accompanied by memorisation of the religious texts, was given in Arabic, thus a child was made familiar with the Arabic and Persian languages almost simultaneously Once he was able to read and write simple sentences, he was taught elementary rules of grammar and asked to

study small books, containing short stories, poems or lessons in Hadis written in simple language The knowledge received by a child in arithmetic was just enough for him to undertake simple financial transactions or maintain accounts as a householder or businessman when be grew up

The institutions of higher learning in Arabic and Persian were called madrasas or jamias, comparable to modern secondary schools or colleges, These were established by the sultans and their provincial governors at central or provincial headquarters and other important towns which contained a sufficiently large number of the Muslim aristocracy Like the hindu gurukuls, these were also residential institutions, accordingly, a madrasa had extensive boarding and lodging arrangements for its students as well as teachers although a fairly large number of the day scholars, belonging to the local populace of the town, also received education, there A madrasa had invariably to be a state enterprise because its cost of establishment and maintenance was very high A great virtue of the muslim system, like its bindu counterpart, was that education from the elementary school to the highest level was free but, unlike the hindu teachers, the Muslim scholars, particularly the subject specialists of repute in these madrasas were paid handsomely and were well-provided for their families The establishment of a madrasa, like a modern college or residential university, was a comprehensive enterprise which needed organised and concerted efforts to materialise whereas bindu institutions of higher learning came into existence by the individual and selfless efforts of the teachers themselves and were supported by the public through voluntary contributions, donations or charities On the other hand, the number of Muslims in India being very

small, the state had to undertake responsibility for the promotion of higher learning, the madrasas which catered to an exotic system of education, had to be planted on the Indian soil, these did not grow out of the sociocultural environment of the country That is why some of the reputed madrasas of the medieval age declined in importance with the change of dynasties or passed out of existence when the hands that fed them were no more

The contemporary literature, particularly the *Ijaz i Khusravi,* gives us a glimpse of the curriculum adopted by the various madrasas of early medieval age Apart from advanced study in the languages and literature of Persian and Arabic, and the Islamic studies, viz, manqul—theology', tafsir—exposition of scriptures', hadis—traditions of the Prophet and the Secular subjects of higher education comprised riyazi—mathematics' kalam—scholasticism', najum—astronomy', akhlaqiat—ethics, falsafa—philosophy', tasawwuf—mysticism', mantic—logic, tawarikh history' and maqulat—rational sciences', the last-named subject comprised an elementary knowledge of modern biology, physics and chemistry We find references to a number of popular textbooks on various subjects written by Indian and foreign scholars which were prescribed by the institutions and made available to the students of higher education Each madrasa had a library of its own with valuable collections of popular textbooks and rare manuscripts In the absence of the printing press, books could be multiplied by the scribes alone, therefore the art of calligraphy was 'highly prized', almost every scholar was taught to be a good calligraphist On the whole the madrasa laid stress on religious studies linguistics and abstract subjects which were not conducive to the development of scientific outlook or broadmindedness among the

scholars, the methods of teaching were also stereotyped The scholars said their prayers in the college and the Quran was invariably recited everyday by those who had memorised its text by heart The teachers lectured in the classrooms while religious discourses and seminars were also a common feature The colleges produced good muslim theologians of conservative habits and high moral character, though narrow-minded and sectarian in outlook, in general By and large the madrasas amply fulfilled the objectives for which they were brought into existence

Long before the establishment of the sultanate of Delhi, the arab governors of Sind were the first to open maktabs, usually attached to the mosques, for religious studies in Arabic on the Indian soil Mahmud of Ghazni, who is notorious in the history of India for his loot and plunder, was no barbarian at home He was a patron of art and learning in whose times flourished a galaxy of scholars, poets and artists They included, among others, Alberuni, Baihaqi, Utbi, Firdausi, Unsari—the poet laureate, and Farabi the philospher, all of whom are known to the students of medieval Indian history for their valuable literary contributions Ghazni and its people benefited immensely from their monarch and his fabulous wealth Mahmud spent lavishly to make his seat of governance one of the finest cities of Asia, he erected magnificent Mosques and huge palaces, established a university, an imperial library and a museum which stored invaluable trophies of war His son and successor Masud opened the first madrasa for the promotion of higher learning in Persian and Arabic at Lahore It was he who persuaded Alberuni in his old age to accept *madad* e *nutash* from the royal court so that be might devote his time peacefully to literary pursuits From Alberuni's writings we can get insight

into the rapid progress that Arabic and Persian literatures were then making inlaying under contribution the rich store of knowledge imbedded in both Sanskrit literature and Greek Indian mathematics and astronomy, philosophy, medicine and pharmacology were favourite subjects of study with the Muslim scholars, and translations of Indian works including a large portion of narrative literature into Arabic and Persian were fast being made by these energetic and inquisitive students Qutubuddin Aibek, the first Muslim viceroy of Delhi under Muhammad Ghori alias Muizuddin, built the first masjid with an attached institution for higher education in Islamic theology at his seat of governance, probably during the lifetime of his master, it was called *Madrasa i Muizzi*, Aibek was a man of letters who had received his earlier education in Persian and Arabic at Nishapur, he prepared the ground for the spread of the Muslim system of education in India at the grassroots 'by the establishment of hundreds of mosques which 'like the churches of Medieval Europe, were centres of both religion and learning' Nasiruddin Qabacha, governor of Multan under Qutubuddin Aibek, founded a madrasa at his seat of governance and out it under the charge of maulana Qutubuddin Kashani Similarly, Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khalji and his succeeding governors in the cast, opened institutions of higher learning in Bihar and Bengal Altumish (1211-36) is said to have founded the Nasiri Madrasa at Delhi in memory of his eldest son Nasiruddin Mahmud who had died in the lifetime of his father Because of the mongol upheavals in central Asia, hundreds of Muslim theologians, scholars and artists fled their hearths and homes and sought shelter at the court of Altumish in Delhi, Amir Kbusrau's father was one of them Alturnish extended liberal patronage to them and enriched the cultural life of the ruling elite We hear of

two madrasas, styled Munizzi and Nasiri at Delhi as referred to above, and one at Jalandhar which were in a flourishing condition during the reigen of sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud (1246-66) the grandson and the last successor of Altumish Minhajus Siraj, the illustrious author of the Tabaqat i Nasiri, acted as the principal of the Nasiri Madrasa for many years During the reign of Ghiasuddin Balban (1266-86) the reputation of Delhi as an advanced centre of Islamic culture and learning spread far and wide The attitude of the sultan towards the men of letters and sages was highly commendable, he is on record to have once advised the crown prince Muhammad thus

> "Spare no pains to discover men of genius, learning and courage You cherish them by kindness and munificence that they may prove the soul of your councils and instrument of your authority"

Jalaluddin Khalji was known to be a man of 'marked literary taste' who 'used to pay learned men their due honour' and by whom 'a literary atmosphere was created about the royal court which did not exist in the previous reign' Alauddin Khalji was a semiliterate man who sternly curbed the power of the nobility and never permitted the ulama to interfere in state politics, he kept them in good humour and never antagonised the mullas and sheikhs through public criticism or ridicule As usual, the muslim scholars, saints and the mullas continued to receive liberal patronage by the sultan, all posts in the judicial and educational establishments were reserved for them The ulama were given a free band in administering the educational institutions, courts, holy places, religious endowments and charitable funds They also enjoyed sufficient freedom of action in tackling the socio-religious problems of the muslim community A

madrasa was built by Alauddin in the new township of Siri, adjacent to the *Houz i Illahi*, its building is said to have been repaired and renovated by Firoze Tughluq (1351-88) long after the death of Alauddin Khalji Firishta tells us that during the reign of Alauddin 'palaces, mosques, universities,, baths, mausolea, forts and all kinds of public and private buildings seemed to rise as if by magic Neither did there in any age, appear such a concourse of learned men from all parts Forty-five doctors, skilled in the services were professors in the universities Barani complains that Alauddin 'did not appreciate scholarship', nevertheless, in the course of his narrative, he makes mention of forty-six learned men who received stipends from the royal court, some or them, according to the historiographer, 'surpassed the most erudite of Bukhara, Samarqand, Baghdad, Cairo, Damascus, Ispahan or Tabriz' Amir Khusrau adorned the courts of all the sultans of Delhi from Balban to Ghiasuddin Tughluq as the poet laureate, his invaluable compositions—Mifthul Futhuh, Khazainul Futuh or Tarikh i Ilahi and Dewal Rani Khizr Khani constitute the most authentic contemporary sources of history of the Khalji dynasty Among those scholars who flourished during the reign of Alauddin Khalji, 'though they did not come under the royal patronage, may be mentioned the names of Tajuddin Ruknuddin, Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya and Sheikh Usman The turkish nobles and provincial governors also 'upheld the cause of learning by their extensive liberality' A very significant development in the literary field is noticeable during the reign of Alauddin Khalji As the muslim rule in India was now more than a century old 'there had already begun a linguistic mingling and intercourse' between the hindus and muslims 'brought about by the pressure of natural laws', it gave birth to the Urdu language, the first important spokesman of

which was none else but Amir Khusrau, the born poet, and the greatest scholar of the age

Muhammad bin Tughluq (1325-51) built yet another madrasa at Delhi with a mosque attached to it Firoze Tughluq left a deep imprint on the educational system of the sultanate by using it as a vehicle primarily for the Spread of Islamic religion and learning He re-established the influence of the ulama in the state politics, constituted hundreds of mosques with maktabs attached to them, and at least thirty madrasas in various parts of his kingdom The existing madrasas at the capital were liberally provided by the state In order to meet the ever increasing demand for higher education, Firoze Tughluq established yet another madrasa, known after him as Madrasa i Firozeshahi in Delhi in 1352, Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi was appointed its principal It was a double storeyed building situated in the heart of a beautifully laid-out garden along the *Houze I Ilahi* Amir Timur carried fire and sword in northwestern India in 1398-99, trampled Delhi under his feet, and gave a serious setback to the sociocultural life of the people, educational institutions and the libraries established so laboriously by the sultans suffered an irreparable loss

Hindus undertake the study of persian

The muslim system of education, based on Islamic studies and Arabic and Persian languages was alien to the hindu civilisation and culture in every respect, it did not meet the religious, sociocultural or literary traditions and aspirations of the indigenous population Persian was made the court language and the educational institutions from top to bottom catered to the religious need of the muslims primarily, therefore, the hindus, in general, stood aloof from them for about two hundred years There might be cited a

few 'stray cases of hindus prosecuting studies of the Muhammadan languages out of political exigency or with the object of securing gainful employment under the sultante albeit, by and large, they hesitated in sending their children to the maktabs, what to say of seeking their admission in the madrasas for higher education In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, therefore, the greatest achievement of the sultans was to inculcate love for the study of Persian and Arabic languages among the Indian converts to Islam or the Indian muslims so-called, it opened the gates of state services to them and resulted in the improvement of their socioeconomic lot The hindus were constrained to take up to the study of Persian language purely out of political and economic considerations, it opened for them the avenues for employment under the sultans

Patronage by Sikander Lodhi (1489-1517) Some of the hindus, called kayasths or the scribes, seem to have picked up courage to send their children to maktabs by the beginning of the fourteenth century to secure for them government service usually as clerks or accountants, particularly in the land revenue establishment, but it was during the reign of Sultan Sikander Lodhi that they took a fancy for the muslim system of education The sultan welcomed the move and encouraged them to join the madrasa for higher education in Persian, obviously, the hindu students in maktabs and madrasas were exempt from participation in muslim prayers and the observation of other religious ceremonies The sultan also encouraged the translations of indigenous literature into Persian for which the hindu scholars were very helpful Under his orders, the Argar Mahabedaka or 'the science of medicine and treatment of diseases' was translated into Persian and given the new title as Tibbi Sikandari, says Abdullah 'was the foundation of the

practice of the physicians of Hind and was thus brought into general use Rizqullah Mushtaqi adds to our information on this account as follows

> "Mian Bhudh succeeded to the late Khwas Khan and was confirmed in the dignity (by Sultan Sikander Lodhi) He got together fine calligraphists and learned men, and employed them in writing books on every science He brought books from Khurasan and gave them to learned and good men, Writers were continually engaged in this work, He assembled the physicians of Hind and Khurasan, and, collecting books upon the science of medicine, he had a selection mad 'The book so compiled received the name of Tibbi Sikandari, and there is no work of greater authority in India "

Having once made an entry into the muslim system of education, the hindu never looked back, to quote Blochmann,

> "The hindus from the sixteenth century took so zealously to Persian education that before another century had elapsed, they had fully come upto the Muhammadans in point of literary acquirements "

The credit for effecting willing participation of the hindus in this system of education goes largely to Sikander Lodhi who was himself a great scholar and poet, he composed with the takhallus or the pen-name of Gulrukhi (Rose-faced) and took delight in reciting the couplets in a melodious voice Sikander Lodhi shifted his headquarters from Delhi to Agra which became an educational centre before long The sultan enjoyed the company of the learned and the sages, we are told that seventeen accomplished and learned men of tried merit were constantly with him in his private apartment He used to attend with pleasure the classroom lectures of Sheikh Abdullah, one of the specialists in maqulat or the rational sciences.

Origin of Kayasths as a Separate Caste The Kayasths belong to one of the profession-castes of the hindus They do dot find mention in the Manusmriti or the buddhist scriptures of the pre-Christian era In the Puranic literature, however, we come across the gradual emergence of a new profession of the scribes, clerks and accountants, referred to by the common denomination of kayasths In the Gupta administrative hierarchy we find the mention of kayasths as a distinct profession They were employed in the revenue and finance departments, or were attached to the courts of the judges, and they performed all sorts of clerical work connected with the assessment and collection of taxes, maintenance of records and accounts, preparation of legal documents and attestation of official deeds etc The kayasths were drawn from the caste hindus including brahmins, kshatriyas and vaishyas though, in the Puranic literature, they were clubbed with the low-caste people and were hated and despised by the priestly class among the brahmins Kalhana, the author of Rajatarangini, talks of the kayasths as accountants and tax-gatherers who incurred the wrath of the brahmins because they 'raised their taxes from all, and exempted none' Yajnavalkya advises the king to protect his subjects from the cheats, aggressors, thieves, robbers and the kayasths or 'the tax-gatherers' Different legends are prevalent among the kayasths themselves to account for their origin, According to one legend, they are the descendants of the sage Kashyapa, through his son Kusa, while another legend informs us that after the creation of the kshatra-varna by Brahma, the kshatriyas were brokenhearted by the destructive acts of Parasurama, and that those who were not so discouraged were called kayasths Yet another legend holds that a great sage called Kachara, who derived his origin from Brahma, and having his of a sudra and

granted him the boon of having a son who became the ancestor of the caste of kayasths R C Dutt had expressed the opinion that the kayasths were recruited mainly from the kshatriyas and the vaishyas, 'brahmins would scarcely condescend to take up such appointments and sudras had not the necessary qualification The kayasths, among the hindus, were probably the first to offer their collaboration to the muslim administrators of Delhi The latter allowed them to hold subordinate services in the new administrative setup and depended heavily upon them in establishing big their contacts with their hindu subjects Obviously, the kayasths were the first to learn Persian language with a view to striking an amicable equation with their new masters and seeking their favours By the time of Sikander Lodhi a large number of hindus had started learning Persian and Arabic languages of their own accord, accordingly, the sultan facilitated their entry into the madrasas for higher education and began to offer them offices of responsibility By virtue of their profession and close association with the muslims, the kayasths did not observe the traditional restrictions and taboos, including the notorious concept of untouchability They adopted not only the language of the ruling elite but also imitated them in their dress, food-habits and manners They were looked down upon by the caste-hindus because they were supposed to degrade themselves by the pursuit of their 'humiliating profession' By the beginning of the sixteenth century, the kayasths had emerged as a distinct profession-caste among the hindus who occupied a position somewhere between the caste-hindus, viz, brahmins, kshatriyas and vaishyas, and the low-castes or the sudras They were usually dubbed as opportunists who disgraced themselves in offering their collaboration to the foreign muslim, rulers of India for the sake of

livelihood The times of Akbar were yet far off when the hindus as' a whole would get the opportunity to enter the madrasas and receive higher education in Persian and Arabic without defiling their caste, and move shoulder to shoulder with the muslim scholars and administrators on status of equality and as full-fledged citizens of the medieval Indian state

Genesis of the Urdu Language

The birth of Urdu was an important outcome of the interaction between Persian and Arabic and the indigenous Indian languages and dialects in the medieval period The earliest specimens of Urdu as a spoken dialect of the Dehlavis or 'the inhabitants of Delhi', the capital of the sultanate, become available to us during the Khalji rule, in the beginning of the fourteenth century The first scholar who is known to have made use of this dialect in his literary compositions was Amir Khusrau, the born poet and literary stalwart of the age

The evolution of Urdu language has had a chequered history In aboriginal mongol language, the word urdu was synonymous with lashkar which implied 'a horde' or 'camp', usually the troops of tartar and other nomadic tribes of central Asia, out of contempt and ridicule, were referred to as urdu or lashkar The military camp or headquarters of the mongol chiefs were likewise known as urdu The term urdu, which later on became a part of the Persian vocabulary too, carries the same literal meaning, viz, 'a camp' even today This term was initially used in India also with reference to the armed bodyguards of the sultans or their royal armies The muslim soldiery, as a matter of fact, was composed of numerous hordes of heterogeneous tribes and peoples from various parts of central Asia who spoke many and varied regional

languages and dialects with the predominance of Persian and Arabic, of course Literary or academic education was conspicuous by its complete absence among the military ranks, nevertheless, the soldiers had to communicate with the conquered people of the foreign lands In India the problem of conversation and communication of thought posed an entirely new challenge to them because the Indian literary heritage based on Sanskrit and its manifold prakrit languages and dialects was radically different from the Persian and Arabic stocks This hurdle was crossed by the immigrants when they bridged the gulf by soldier-like pick and choose between the words and phrases of the two diverse linguistic fields which gave rise to a spoken dialect, referred to as the *Zaban i Urdu i Mualla*—the language of the exalted army' or simply the *Zaban i Urdu* This heterogeneous language became known, in the first instance, as Dehlavi, Hindavi or Hindwai By the beginning of the fourteenth century it had become prevalent not only among the turkish soldiery but also the populace of Delhi and other urbanised centres of the sultanate Nevertheless, its impact was felt most in Delhi, the metropolis of the sultanate, where the foreign immigrants and the Indians, including the hindu converts to Islam, had to deal with one another at all the social levels

Quite a few theories have been put forward by the modern researchers about the origin and growth of the Urdu language none of which gives the complete answer The seeds of this language seem to have been sown in northwestern India or the Punjab where the Ghaznavids held their sway for three quarters of a century before the establishment of the sultanate It were the Ghaznavids who grafted the Persian and Arabic languages over the indigenous language of this

region which may vaguely be referred to as Punjabi although Punjab, as a vernacular language owes its development to a much later period When Delhi was conquered by Muhammad Ghori, a large number of military officers and soldiers, belonging to the erstwhile Ghaznavids kingdom of Lahore, migrated to the Gangetic valley as a part of the forces of occupation, they brought their spoken dialect of Indo-Turkish origin to Delhi In those days, the people of the cis-Sutlej region (modern Haryana), including Delhi, spoke the Hariani of Haryanvi, one of the Hindi dialects According to one version, the spoken dialect of the Delhi region in the thirteenth century was Khari Boli and not Hariani Whatever the case, both of these dialects exercised a profound impact on the genesis of what became known as Dehlavi or the Hindavi language of Amir Khusrau's days At a later stage, when Sikander Lodhi transferred his headquarters from Delhi to Agra, the Dehlavi language was further enriched by Brajbhasha and Rajasthani, the two other Hindi dialects of Agra and Ajmer respectively Thus the Zaban i Urdu or 'language of the army' developed as a composite language by the synthesis of the two exotic languages Persian and Arabic, and the various indigenous dialects, including the Panjabi, Hariani, Khari Boli, Brajbhasha and Rajasthani

Dehlavi or Hindavi was the mother of what subsequently became known as Urdu and Hindi languages respectively During the early stages of development, both of these languages were identical with the exception of their scripts Some muslim scholars began to use the Persian script for expressing their sentiments in Dehlavi or the *Zaban i Urdu* in the fourteenth century when it was in its stage of a spoken dialect Amir Khusrau, one of the pioneers of the language, seems to have taken the initiative in this

matter The hindu writers, on the other hand, employed the indigenous Devanagiri script for writing the same language It made all the difference As soon as Dehlavi or the *Zaban i Urdu* was put to writing, the muslim scholars showed the tendency to use not only Persian and Arabic vocabulary more profusely but also copied the syntax, similes and themes from those languages to give it a literary form, thus bringing into existence what became known simply as the Urdu language The same Dehlavi language, when written in Devanagari script, assumed the name of Hindi (from the original Hindavi of Amir Khusrau) with the passage of time, it drew more heavily upon the indigenous literary stock based on Sanskrit

As mentioned earlier, the sultans had introduced Persian as the court language It was not intelligible to the Indian masses, including even the local converts to Islam The credit for recognising Dehlavi or Hindavi as a language of the masses goes to Amir Khusrau who made frequent use of it in his poems and other literary compositions He has rightly been acclaimed 'the first prominent representative of Indo-Muslim culture' who took pride in his country of domicile and favoured free give-and-take or synthesis between the local and exotic traditions in all walks of life, including education and learning Amir Khusrau belonged to an aristocratic family of turkish immigrants who had settled in the Etah district of modern Uttar Pradesh, he was born at Patiali in c 1252 A D Khusrau's father Shaifuddin was a lachin turk, albeit his mother was an Indian muslim, she was the daughter of Imadul Mulk, the Mir Bakhshi (Paymaster General) of Balban Khusrau lost his father at the tender age of seven and was brought to Delhi to be looked after by his maternal grandfather in a highly aristocratic environment He was brought up just like a prince in the company of

the most privileged children of the turkish nobility of the capital Khusrau grew up to be a youth of 'versatile talents' with intense love for letters and natural flair for poetry He made his debut as a budding poet and singer in the aristocratic circles of Delhi while in his teens His contact with the khanqah of Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya can also be traced back to his early age He used to visit that place in the company of his grandparents and was sometimes encouraged to come on to the stage to recite poems and hymns in praise of God to the great delight of the audience That set the stage for Khusrau's popularity with the aristocracy as well as the masses of Delhi almost simultaneously He won the affection of Sheikh Nizamuddin as one of his most brilliant pupils and earned the title of Turkallah—the Turk of God from the sage In those days, Dehlavi or Hindavi language was gaining popularity at the religious discourses of the sufi saints, it had, in fact, been found to be the most useful vehicle of expression by them throughout the country for the peaceful propagation of Islam among the Indians Amir Khusrau made liberal use of Hindavi in his poetic compositions through which he won the hearts of the commoners

According to Amir Khusrau, Hindi or *Zaban i Hind* stood no comparison with the Arabic language, nevertheless, he found it to be as good as Persian, probably for the purpose of poetic composition He actually uses the word Hindi (and not Hindavi) for the Zaban i Hind or the language of the Indian masses, which was as yet comparatively free from the Persian or Arabic says

> Zaban i Hind ham tazi misaal ast, Keh amezash
> dar anja kam majaal ast

Amir Khusrau has rightly been regarded as one of

the founding fathers of modern Hindi language and literature as well, he is other popular sayings in Hindi As the indigenous language did not find favour with the turkish aristocracy or the royal court, Khusrau made use of it just 'for fun and entertainment, particularly, with the object of sharing his sentiments with the commonfolk, He took delight in presenting a mixture of poetic compositions in Persian and Hindi, thus giving currency to the term Rekhta or mixture to such a literary hotchpotch

As a matter of fact, the two modern languages, row known as Urdu and Hindi respectively, were almost indistinguishable in the early medieval period The gradually emerging lingua franca of the Indo-Muslim society was actually known as Rekhta or mixture of various languages in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries It has already been suggested how the use of two different scripts, Persian and Devanagari respectively, set the stage for the subsequent bifurcation of Urdu as distinct from the Hindi language When written in the Persian script with the preponderant use of Persian and Arabic phraseology and syntax, it became known as Urdu/

Development of urdu language in the Deccan

Though born in the north as a spoken dialect, Urdu was never patronised by the sultan's of Delhi nor did it occupy a place of respectability at the court of the Imperial Mughals (1526-1707) It was one of the later mughals, Muhammad Shah alias Rangila (1718-48) who replaced Persian by Urdu as his court language at Delhi Nevertheless, Urdu attained the status of a written language in the Deccan in the fourteenth century It penetrated into the south actually as urdu or 'the language of the lashkar' during the days of Alauddin Khalji. The muslim armies of occupation and

the imperial officers from the north adopted Urdu or Rekhta as a mode of expression in their dealings with the people of the south As such it drew heavily upon the south Indian languages, including Gujarati, Marathi, Telugu and Kanarese Urdu was given preference over Persian as a court language by the Bahmanids and their successor states of Bijapur and Golconda, the detailed account of which has been given elsewhere in this study

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Architectural Monuments of the Sultans

The sultans of Delhi are known to have been great builders They founded many new towns throughout their dominions which became flourishing centres of trade and commerce before long They built royal palaces, forts, public buildings, mosques, *madrasas, dargahs* (monasteries), *serais* and mausoleums Most of the buildings constructed by them have either disappeared altogether or lie in ruins albeit a large number of beautiful mosques and tombs built by the sultans or during their age have survived the wear and tear of time and constitute the living monuments of the sultanate period uptil this day

Of course, as regards the sociocultural advancement of early medieval period, the sultans of Delhi made the greatest contribution in the domain of architecture Their hectic building activity gave rise to what is usually styled as the Indo-Muslim architecture The spirit of synthesis between the two cultural streams, which manifested itself in various spheres, was best expressed in the field of architecture, it was here that the blending of the two architectural styles—one indigenous and the other foreign, produced marvellous results almost instantaneously

The scholars of ancient Indian history are aware that this country has had a very strong and well-

developed architectural tradition going back to the pre-Christian era The turko-afghan conquerors occupied the principal Indian towns which became the hubs of their political activity at the central, provincial and local levels These were flourishing urban habitats of the hindus, adorned with magnificent buildings and public monuments *albeit* the sultans and their ruling *elite* were eager to maintain their separate identity as victors, therefore, they usually held themselves aloof from the residential quarters of the hindus

To some extent,. it was necessitated for reasons of their personal security as well Moreover, they had a living style of their own and brought with them 'the Islamic tradition of architecture which was quite distinct from that of the ancient Indian art and architecture There is a force in the arguments advanced by a modern scholar that 'the muslims had their own approach to the art of building both in form and spirit and in methods and materials of construction

The Islamic architectural tradition was conditioned by the concepts and practical needs of their religion and the geophysical background of the central Asian countries from which they had come Accordingly, they initiated a vigorous architectural activity as a matter of necessity and taste and raised new townships, very often in close proximity to the ancient Indian towns, throughout the sultanate, for their official and personal residential purposes The muslim rulers adopted Delhi as their capital where they constructed as many as seven new townships or building complexes in the neighbourhood of the old town during the period of their rule Their provincial governors and local officers did likewise at their places of residence and administrative control In the humble opinion of the author, their building activity was akin

to 'the model town movement' which gained momentum in India after the dawn of independence, particularly, during the fifties of the present century, before it was overtaken by the subsequent mad rush for modernisation and unwieldy expansion of our towns and cities

The central Asian tradition of architecture brought by the sultans to India is sometimes styled as 'the Islamic architecture' which is rather a misnomer Arabia, where Islam took its birth, had no architectural traditions The only structure of architectural interest, prevalent in that land, was 'the caravan roofless serai built in a rectangular form with a gate and guard's post and small chambers, protected by strong peripheral walls Of course, it left a distinct mark on the infant Islamic culture, the mosque is a replica of this *caravan serai*, with the additional provision of a prayer niche in the wall, situated opposite to the main gate With the spread of Islam in the various countries of central Asia, north Africa, and eastern Europe, their architects readily adopted the salient features of the architectural styles of these countries, resulting in the development of a composite Islamic architecture on which the Persian influence was predominant According to an observation, 'the arabs had no arts of their own' and that the so-called 'Islamic art' was nothing but 'an adaptation to the requirements of their religion of indigenous elements, borrowed from the various nations which they overcame Modern researches have laid bare the fact that ancient India had made, in times immemorial, a substantial contribution towards the development of art and architecture in the countries of central Asia, including Persia particularly Therefore, the so-called 'Islamic architecture' brought by The sultans to Delhi had itself a considerable Indian share No hair-

splitting between the Indian and the Persian strains therein would help in clinching the issue when the relationships between the two countries can be traced back to the prehistoric times

The turko-afghan rulers of India observed no reservations in adopting the Indian forms and styles of architecture in spite of all the prejudices that, they initially, bore against the vanquished infidels, and their culture Some of the factors responsible for the instant blending of the two architectural traditions were simply beyond their control Being military adventurers, they did not bring any craftsmen or architectural experts with them to India They had perforce to employ the Indian architects, masons, stonecutters and other workers for the construction of their buildings The Indian workers, with a rich experience of the indigenous styles, forms and methods of construction, introduced consciously or unconsciously, architectural designs and decorative details unknown to the muslims before Secondly, the turkish rulers made extensive use of the rich architectural material obtained by the destruction and demolition of the hindu temples and other public buildings Very often they took forced occupation of the magnificent hindu and jain temples and educational institutions and converted them into mosques by simply demolishing their roofs and idolatrous features and erecting domes and minarets in their place As a consequence, the Indian concepts and forms of architecture were bound to have a deep imprint on the buildings of the sultans

Broadly speaking, the indigenous architecture was based on the general principle of 'beam and bracket' which enabled the construction of vast and sprawling building complexes of almost any dimensions It was made possible by the erection of narrow columns and

pillars, long beams and corbel brackets to support the flat roofs to which any number of storeys could be added In technical language, this style is called *trabeate* which implies the use of rows of pillars and long beams, instead of arches and vaults, to span the spaces Behind this most scientific and highly developed architectural principle lay the centuries of building experience and architectural heritage of the Indians which manifested itself in various art styles, shades and hues On the other hand, 'the Islamic style' was arcuate (bent like a how or arched) which employed arches and vaults to bridge the spaces and envisaged the construction of graceful domes in place of flat roofs, obviously, such an art style was not very helpful in the construction of spacious palaces or multistorey building structures This was the basic difference between the two art styles variously termed as 'Indian' and 'Islamic' or 'hindu' and 'muslim' arts respectively, many other architectural differences between the two traditions formed but a corollary to it

Among the other distinguishing features of the two art styles may be mentioned the 'solidarity and grace' or strength and beauty of the Indian architecture, these two virtues, which were not to be found in the same measure in any other architectural style of the world, were readily adopted by the sultans of Delhi in their building activities The most highly developed temple architecture, marked by its lofty *shikhars* and infinite richness and variety of sculptural forms was, of course, repulsive to the muslim mind Both the art styles were decorative in their own way *albeit* their concepts of decoration were different The 'hindu style of ornamentation, though very rich in character, was expressive of natural, particularly human forms On the other hand, 'the decoration of the muslims, under religious injunction, avoided

representation of living beings and took the form of flat surface ornament depicting arabesque or geometrical and floral patterns, inscriptions in various styles of writing, gilding and painting', etc According to an art critic

> "The Islamic architecture of India is an interesting story of these two seemingly opposite styles mingling with each other with varying degrees in different parts of the country at different periods of time, depending upon climatic conditions, type and availability of material and similar other factors It is for this reason that the features of Indian style are found freely employed in the muslim monuments of India The qualities of strength and grace, typical of the hindu monuments, were borrowed by the muslims, who also did not infrequently use the trabeate system

Three phases of development

The growth and development of the Indo-Islamic architecture' during the sultanate period took place in three phases During the first phase were erected the buildings at Lahore, Ajmer and Delhi by the Slave and the Khalji monarchs, the construction of buildings by the Tughluqs constitutes the second phase, quite distinct and advanced from the earlier one The construction of architectural monuments by the sultans of Delhi suffered a setback after the downfall of the Tughluq dynasty, albeit, by this time, the architectural activities had shifted to the provincial and regional capitals of the sultanate whose governors, particularly after declaring their independence, beautified their capitals by the erection of magnificent palaces, mosques and other public monuments This marked the third phase of development of architecture during the period under review

Qutubuddin Aibek started with the construction of

mosques as symbols of Islamic victory over the infidel lands The mosques of Quwat-ul-Islam at Delhi and *Adhai din ko Jhompra* at Ajmer were built by him out of the material of demolished hindu temples during the period of his viceroyalty

The construction of the former was undertaken by him immediately after the fall of Prithvi Raj Chauhan in the second battle of Tarain It was raised on the plinth of a hindu temple and it contains a spacious hall, covered with a flat roof, supported by rows or pillars, the whole structure is a crude adaptation of the once magnificent hindu place of worship to which ‘an Islamic touch’ has been provided by an arched screen, containing calligraphic reproduction of the Quranic text, in front of the prayer-chamber

Similarly, the *masjid* at Ajmer was erected on the ruins of a Sanskrit college It was occupied by the Marathas on the decline of the Mughal empire, it is said that they celebrated a festival there which lasted two days and a half, hence the name *Adhai din ka Jhompra* The building complex raised by Qutubuddin Aibek round about the *Qila i Raj Pithaura* was the first of the seven cities of Delhi’ built by the muslim rulers Aibek started the construction of the world famous *Qutub Minar* in 1199 in the memory of a *sufi* saint Khwaja Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, it was completed by Altumish Intended originally to be a part of the *masjid* from where the muezzin could issue a call to the faithful’ for prayer, it, ultimately, emerged as a tower of victory ‘to cast the shadow of God over the east and the west’ as per an inscription carved on its surface Made up of red sandstone, with the artistic grafting of white marble in its higher reaches, the Qutub Minar is a masterpiece of the Indo-Islamic technology and art, it was designed by the muslim architects but built by the hindu craftsmen One of the

highest and perhaps the most beautiful stone-towers, it is considered to be one of 'the seven wonders of the world' Originally it comprised four storeys and was 225 feet in height with a circumference of 150 feet at the base, gradually tapering in its ascent The fourth storey of the Minar was damaged by lightning and got repaired subsequently by Firoze Tughluq who replaced it by two smaller ones, thus raising the height of the tower to 240 feet A circular stairway takes the visitors to the top of the tower while each of its five storeys is surmounted by a 'projecting gallery, encircling the tower, these balconies are supported by miniature arches, decorated with comb-work of exquisite beauty'

The tomb of Altumish, built by the sultan during his lifetime near the *Quwatul Islam* mosque, is a beautiful monument or the Persian art It contains a single chamber, made up of red sandstone with an outer layer of grey granite It has arched entrances on three sides and a *mehrab,* Banked by two small arched entrances on the fourth side An entirely different type of tomb was built by Altumish on the grave of his son Nasiruddin Mahmud, it is called the *Sultan Garhi* and is situated in Malkapur at a distance of about three miles from the Qutub Minar, Its exterior is made of grey granite stone and white marble while its inner base is octagonal in form and the roof is supported by beautiful pillars with decorative capitals and arches of the hindu architectural designs Balban's tomb, situated to the southeast of *Qila i Rai Pithaura* is a square chamber, covered by a dome which has doorways on all sides It is also furnished with the arches of the hindu style

Alauddin Khalji took keen interest in the building activities He prepared an elaborate plan for the extension of the architectural complex in the Qutub area *Alai Darwaza,* 'a tresure-gem of Islamic

architecture' was completed in 1311, it served as an entrance to the imperial campus Its building consists of a square ball, covered by a dome, with arched doorways on each of its four sides It is made of red sandstone, picked out by white marble strips and enriched by calligraphic inscriptions and decorative carvings Alauddin built a new fort and the imperial township of *Siri*—the second of 'the seven cities of Delhi' It was situated to the north of the Qutub complex and its foundation was laid in 1303 Here the sultan built a magnificent palace, *Mahal Hazar Satun*—the palace of thousand pillars' The entire town now lies in ruins and is located by the bare outlines of an erstwhile extensive tank, called the *Hauz i Illahi* or *Hauz i Khas* Alauddin had also built the *Jamait Khana* mosque 'wholly in conformity with the muslim ideas', within the enclosure of Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya's shrine, it was extended during the Tughluq period,

The early sultans displayed their vanity and splendour as, conquerors of the land by spending lavishly on the construction of public buildings which were marked by elaborate ornamentation and decorative features of heterogeneous character The Tugbluq monarchs were more realistic in handling this work They constructed beautiful buildings to provide more comfort and luxury to their dwellers at much less cost Their buildings, though 'less elegant and artistic' in an abstract sense, were marked by simplicity and austerity Ghiasuddin Tugbluq founded 'the third city of Delhi', named Tugbluqabad, to the cast of the Qutub complex It was a sort of fortified township built on a hill top and protected by its own double or triple defensive walls Quadrangular in shape, measuring about 2,000 metres, on each side, and overlooking the entire Yamuna belt because of its elevation from the

ground level, the township of Tughluqabad was provided with a magnificent royal palace and numerous other public buildings all of which now lie in ruins It has rightly been said that 'few strongholds of antiquity look more imposing in their ruins than the town of Tughluqabad Its sharply sloping walls, made of huge irregular stones and having colossal circular bastions at close intervals, heavy battlements and a series of loopholes create an impression of great strength and solidarity 'Within its walls may now be seen ruined streets and buildings and the traces of the royal palace once roofed with gilded tiles', and 'the golden bricks which, when the sun rose, shone so dazzlingly that no one could gaze at it steadily' The soldier sultan built his own mausoleum beneath the walls of the city with which it was connected by a causeway The tomb, which unlike the town, has survived in a fairly' preserved state, is made of red sandstone with inlays of marble, and has an irregular pentagonal base, it is surmounted by a huge dome of marble, and the entire structure is enclosed by a battlemented sloping wall with a massive 'bastion at each corner', thus giving it the shape of a fortress

The small fortress of Adilabad, situated in the neighbourhood of Tughluqabad, was constructed by Muhammad bin Tughluq He founded *Jahanpanah*—'the fourth city of Delhi' in between and by linking the first and the second cities by walls of huge thickness The entire structure now lies in ruins with the exception of *Sathpalah Band* and the *Bijai Mandal* The sultan must have made a great contribution towards the construction of public buildings at Daulatabad in the Deccan which was made the imperial capital by him for a short while, most of his buildings have, however, disappeared because of the poor building material used in their construction

Firoze Tughluq was a builder par excellence who made a rich contribution towards the construction of public works, including the new towns, palaces, mosques, tombs, water reservoirs, *caravan serais,* bridges, canals, public baths, *madrasas,* shrines, charity houses, gardens and what not, He founded the cities of Fatehabad, Hissar Firoza (modern Hissar in Haryana) and Jaunpur He built 'the fifth city of Delhi, called Firozabad, which was situated to the north of *Siri* Therein he raised three palaces, including the one palace-fort, now called Kotla Firoze Shah, nine mosques and many public buildings to accommodate the courtiers and secretarial offices

Indo-Islamic architecture

The invasion of Amir Timur in 1398-99 gave a serious setback to the sociocultural advancement of northern India, in general, and the architectural activities of the sultans of Delhi, in particular He descended upon the country as 'a scourge of God' and wrought untold miseries upon its people The whole of northwestern region, including Delhi and a part of the Doab, was trampled under feet by the turkish hordes and robbed of its incalculable wealth, dozens of big towns were sacked and their magnificent buildings razed to the ground, Delhi, once the metropolis of an extensive muslim empire in the subcontinent and the hub of Islamic culture and civilisation to the east of Baghdad, Jay in ruins, with its debris soaked in the blood of its unfortunate citizens The Sayyads and the Lodhis, had neither the time nor resources to attend to the architectural activities Nevertheless, Khizr Khan, the founder of the Sayyad dynasty, laid the foundation of a new township, called Khizrabad, and his successor Mubarak Shah made a half-hearted attempt to raise yet another building complex, known after him as Mubarakabad, which is now located by the tomb of the

founder The fifteenth century is marked by the appearance of numerous tombs of artistic beauty and strength, constructed by the Sayyad and the Lodhi sultans as well as their nobility which dot the present metropolis of Delhi and constitute attractive visiting spots for the sightseers These include, among others, the tombs of Sikander Lodhi, *Rare Khan, Chhote Khan, Bara Gumbad Shish Gumbad, Dadi ka Gwnbad, Poli ka Gwnbad,* and *Moth ki Masjid*

The Indo-Islamic architectural activity had become almost universal throughout the length and breadth of the empire during the Tugbluq period With the decline and disintegration of the sultanate, the architectural activities were also decentralised and shifted to the provincial capitals and the regional states which emerged on its ruins It resulted in the diversification of the Indo-Islamic architecture, giving birth to a number of art styles with the manifestation of new features, distinct from those of the traditional Indo-Islamic architecture as had been patronised by the sultans of Delhi in the thirteenth and the first half of the fourteenth centuries Among others, the centres of local or regional architectural styles included those of Bengal, Jaunpur, Malwa, Gujarat, Punjab and the Bahmani kingdom of the south whose rulers extended liberal patronage to art and architecture Throughout this period, the bindu states including those of Mewar, Marwar and Vijayanagar, preserved and extended the ancient Indian architectural styles and forms with equally great enthusiasm

Bengal had a strong local tradition of art and architecture in ancient time,, accordingly, the muslim rulers of the province, whether independent or subordinate to the sultans of Delhi, became responsible for the emergence of remarkably original Bengali style of Indo-Islamic architecture soon after the

establishment of their foothold there It retained many popular hindu traditions 'in the structural as well as decorative fields' even in the construction of purely Islamic art forms like the *masjids* and tombs The muslim architects adopted the hindu temple style of curvilinear cornices, dwarf square pillars and the carved designs, like lotus, for decoration Paucity of stone necessitated the use of kiln-burnt bricks as the chief building material as ever before although the use of stone, where available, was also not neglected by them The tomb and a mosque of Zafar Khan Ghazi at Tribeni (district Hooghly), which constituted the earliest architectural monument of the Indo-Islamic style in Bengal, now lie in partial ruins, these had been constructed almost exclusively from material of the hindu buildings The *Adina Masjid,* constructed by Sikander Shah (1359-83) at Pandua (West Bengal), was said to be 'as big as the eighth century *Jam i Masjid* at Damascus', it had a vast central courtyard measuring 397 feet by 159 feet According to J P Guha, 'the central nave of its sanctuary which measured 70 feet by 34 feet, with its pointed archway, 50 feet high and 33 feet wide, and trefoil arched mihrab at the western side, bearing hindu designs, all point to a work of rich imagination' The Eklakhi tomb of Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah (1415-31) at Pandua exhibits "the true character of the Bengali style of Indo-Islamic architecture The *Dakhil Darwaza* at Gaur (West Bengal) is an imposing gateway, which has been built of bricks with terracotta surface decoration Among other extant monuments of the later Ilyas Shahi and subsequent rulers of Bengal (1442-1576) may be mentioned *Tantipara, Chamkan Darasbarl, Lotan, Bara Sona, Chhota Sona* and *Qadam Rasul* mosques at Gaur and Bagha masjid in the Rajashahi district of modern Bangladesh

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